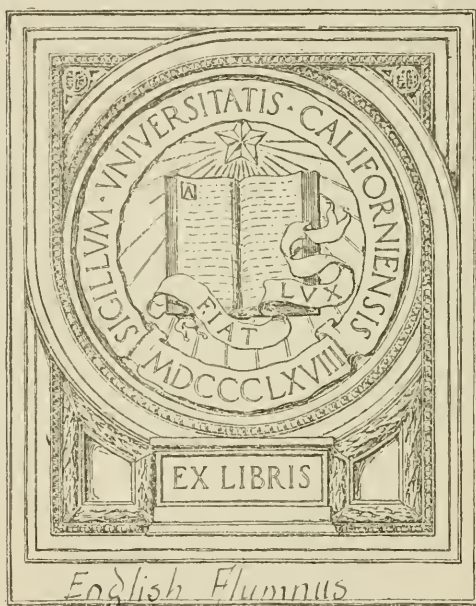


GIFT OF
English Fluminus



English Fluminus

60

71

THE TRAGEDY OF PARDON

‘PEACE, THE CHARM’S WOUND UP!’

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

THE
MUSEUM
OF
THE
MUSEUM
OF
THE
MUSEUM



UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

THE TRAGEDY OF PARDON DIANE

BY THE AUTHOR OF

‘BORGIA’

Michael Field, recd.

LONDON
SIDGWICK AND JACKSON, LTD.

3 ADAM STREET, W.C.

1911

NO. 1000
1000000000

English Alumnus

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

PR 4699
F5 T7
1911
MAIN

THE TRAGEDY OF PARDON

ERRATUM

DIAN

Page 230, line 4, *for* 'Mass,' *read* 'mass.'

486272

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

PR 4699
F5 T7
1911
MAIN

THE TRAGEDY OF PARDON

486272

PERSONS

MARK, King of Cornwall.

TRISTAN, his nephew.

JOVELIN, Duke of Arundel.

KAHEDIN, his son.

THE BISHOP OF THAMES,

MARJODO, Seneschal at Tintagel.

MELOT OF AQUITAINE, a Dwarf and Astrologer.

KURVENAL, servant to Tristan.

THE CHIEF HUNTSMAN OF KING MARK.

ISEULT, Queen of Ireland.

ISEULT, her daughter, Queen of Cornwall.

ISEULT OF THE WHITE HANDS, daughter of Jovelin.

BRANGAENA, kinswoman and friend of Iseult of Cornwall.

*Sons of Rual, priests, subjects of King Mark and of Duke
Jovelin, grooms, huntsmen, little maidens.*

SCENES: *At Dublin, on the sea at Tintagel and Caerleon, in
Cornish Forest, in Parmenie and at Arundel.*

THE TRAGEDY OF PARDON

PROLOGUE

A laboratory in the royal palace at Dublin. It is so dusk that the various objects are only seen as shades of deeper darkness.

QUEEN ISEULT *looms beside an alembic in the foreground.*

BRANGAENA *kneels further back adjusting flax on a spindle.*

QUEEN. Where art thou ?

BRANGAENA. Here.

QUEEN. The Love-Charm is combined !
It waits to live.

BRANGAENA. Before the incantation,
Tell me for whom I gathered on the hills
The maddening colt's-foot that the mares and
stallions

Wrench from the dust to feed their rushing flames ;
For whom, on the sea-shore, sea-holly's root ?

QUEEN. My child, who, loses all, shall lose not love,
Or she will walk the earth of men a shade ;

A shade is woman if she may not love,
 And silent are the deeps from birth to death
 If love move not with widely ruling stroke
 The billows of the heart of woman's breast.

BRANGAENA. Great Queen, great wisdom !

QUEEN. Thou shalt pour the wine
 For Mark of Cornwall and my child Iseult.
 But, sweet, beware : not even a dew-drop's
 droplet

Must pass thy lips. It is so terrible,
 The senses were obsequious to one touch,
 As if to transport.

BRANGAENA. In my careful hands
 It shall be guarded as within thy hands.

QUEEN. Brangaena, I will plight my child to Love,
 By deeply working minerals, by juices
 That thrust the force of Venus through the blades,
 And fragrant, piercing flower-hearts, or control it
 In secret tubers. As within my womb
 I fashioned her for life, so now I fashion
 Within this marvellous alembic's chalice
 Her fuller fate, her love's nativity.
 Draw out thy wheel and twist the double threads ;
 Thou wilt hear music through the air : spin on.

[BRANGAENA *sits at the distaff.* QUEEN ISEULT
touches the vessel with her sceptre.

O ancient Love, of Chaos bred
 From seeding darkness of the void ;
 O link of all the germens spread
 Through hollow gales by hate deployed,

Fuse with a star-pang from the stars,
That are thy torches never spent,
The faculties within this vase,
Each touching each, yet continent.

Unite them, till of joy they found
A sway like that that holds the earth
And sea and fire and ether bound ;
A sway that is grown old at birth,
That is a freshness in the tomb.

Oh, sweep like beauty through their tide,
And be thy benison the doom
That never more they shall divide !

*[Two star-rays fall on the alembic and ignite it,
filling the chamber with soft light. A long,
wailing strain of music rends the air ; then
a fanfare is heard ; and the long, wailing
strain of music dies on the air.]*

Hold firm the twisted threads ; bring me a flask.

[She pours from the alembic.]

See, how this nectar plunges kiss in kiss ;
Smell how the breath of it is like a land's
Where all the groves of trees are florulent.
Swift, I must close it ! Twine the double threads
About the vial's neck. This little crystal
Can laugh Pandora's chest to ridicule,
For joy as well as sorrow is within,
Necessity that puts out feeble hope,
The lightning that Jove brought with him to
bed

When he came godlike upon Semele,
The currents that for ever wash the steps
Of Ocean's palace-cave, two horoscopes,
And the great motion Life, the calm of Death,
With marriage of all these till Love shall end.

ACT I

SCENE I

An early spring morning on the sea.

The ship of TRISTAN is moored by the coast of Wales : the sailors are gone ashore. The stern of the ship is higher than the head, so that the deck slopes toward the hidden head. Immediately in front is the mainmast and the door of the cabin. TRISTAN, with his back turned, leans against the helm, his arm over the wheel. His form is seen against the light green hills of the coast.

Once or twice he whistles bird-notes—then keeps silence.

A few LITTLE MAIDENS are playing amid the tackle on the foremost part of the deck. TRISTAN, roused by their cries and laughter, turns and watches them.

1. LITTLE MAIDEN. Catch me, if you can, O Hoodman, blind as buzzard.
2. LITTLE MAIDEN. As mole or bat or beetle.
4. LITTLE MAIDEN. Or as the blinkard owl.
Lo and behold me here !

6 THE TRAGEDY OF PARDON [ACT I.

1. LITTLE MAIDEN. Look and observe our ambush !
Who put your eyes out, Hoodman ?

2. LITTLE MAIDEN. Away !

1. LITTLE MAIDEN. Away !

4. LITTLE MAIDEN. Away !

[They rush off with screams of merriment to starboard.]

[ISEULT enters from the cabin, coming up the steps. She stands fronting the head-sea and her country left behind.]

ISEULT. Would I might lie down on my Irish shore,
Dead on my shore ! *[She falls on the deck.]*

[TRISTAN draws near and stretches one of the idle sails out to shadow ISEULT ; then he paces a little distance from her.]

[Unheeding.]

Cursed be the sea !

[TRISTAN comes up softly, and says in a low voice, as if to himself.]

TRISTAN. He loved me from the sea ; I was an orphan,

A cast-away, a wandering child ;

He loved me from the sea, as his own son—

[ISEULT raises her head.]

I looked on you

In Ireland, when your Mother bore me in

As a sick wandering harper from the sea . . .

ISEULT *(rising)*. My Mother, very dark shall be her sunset !

TRISTAN *(fixing his eyes on her and continuing)*

steadily). And when I left the dream was in my heart

To sing your beauty to the only mortal
Worthy of men to hear. Not Tantris' harp—
Tristan's—with fame that rustles through the world,

Sang to King Mark of Cornwall, my liege-lord—
Iseult is fair ; there is no woman's child
So fair to look upon.

Aurora's daughter and her child, fair Helen,
Are rumoured fair, as if all beauty
Were gathered up in them as in two flowers.

O King, such idleness

Thou shalt no more believe ! The sun of beauty

Dawned not in Greece ! 'Tis risen in our day,

In Ireland, where the sun, born of the dawning,

Iseult, the daughter of Iseult, shines down,
Gladdening all creatures, giving fame to all ;
For so her beauty is diffused, through her
All women in her brightness are shown bright.

[ISEULT *sinks on the gunwale.*

Queen, you are faint . . . these days you have not eaten

Nor drunk ! . . . And it is hot within the sun,
Burning down on us in his noon—you parched.
Maidens (*turning*), a flask of wine, a cup !

I. LITTLE MAIDEN. Where find them ?

2. LITTLE MAIDEN. Here is a cup the helmsman
threw away
Before he left the ship.

[*She gives it to* TRISTAN.

3. LITTLE MAIDEN. Brangaena set
A flask of wine above her bed.

I. LITTLE MAIDEN. Then fetch it.

[Exit one of the LITTLE MAIDENS.

[TRISTAN and ISEULT stand silent. The other MAIDENS clustered at a distance chat in clear voices.

I. LITTLE MAIDEN. Look, Nessa,
The pebbles and the sand within the green
Of this still harbour are as white as flour
Upon a miller's stones.

2. LITTLE MAIDEN. And all at once
The sea-mews dive.

3. LITTLE MAIDEN. And how the seamen laugh
Around the little boat that bore Brangaena.
I wonder what she buys for us.

I. LITTLE MAIDEN. She landed
To sit upon the grass again, to wander
Along the seaward banks of primroses,
And smell soft breathings through the salt.

3. LITTLE MAIDEN. O Nessa,
Can you not smell the primroses? I can.

[The MAIDEN returns with BRANGAENA'S flask: she gives it to TRISTAN and runs to join her fellows, who have begun a new game round the wheel.]

TRISTAN (*pouring*). And you will touch the wine-cup with your lips?

ISEULT. No, I will drink the wine . . .

[*She stretches out her hand, half fainting, for the cup, and as she drinks gazes at him over the brim.*

As sweet as hydromel and bergamot :

How exquisite a fume !

[*She drinks no more and hands the cup to him.*

Tristan, the wine ! . . .

TRISTAN (*as the empty cup falls from his hand*).

But you are beautiful !

But you are very beautiful !

[*He turns and moves away down the vessel.*

ISEULT. Not gone ?

Tristan !

TRISTAN (*returning*). You called——

ISEULT. The wine !

It covers me like death. [ISEULT *faints*.

TRISTAN. She stirs her lids,

Her lips ; the little movements gall me, pester

Till I could cast her from me. Yet so warm

A fervour mantles through me from her breath,

A solace that forbids me to be lone

And inauspicious any more. Iseult !

I cannot love her. Ah, what have I thought !

Almost I am his son, and she . . . almost she is
his wife. [ISEULT *moves*.

I cannot meet her eyes ; there must be silence

Between our eyes or there is nothing left
To give or take.

ISEULT. How lovely is the light,
And a white sea-bird sails across. . . .

*[She lies looking up; a slow smile spreads
over her face: she keeps looking up for
a little while; then she closes her eyes.]*

What darkness !

[Suddenly she opens her eyes on TRISTAN.]

My life, my death ! *[They kiss.]*

No, opening flowers. . . . It has no name . . .
far off

As Africa. I think it is the magic

My mother knows. Why do you vex yourself ?

TRISTAN. But I have wandered

So far I never more shall find the path.

ISEULT. There are no paths marked out before.
Beloved,

The way is where we tread. There are no ways
For the arrow and the stars.

*[Cry of the LITTLE MAIDENS as they rush from
the seaward side of the vessel to the landward.]*

ALL. Brangaena comes.

1. LITTLE MAIDEN. Her bosom full of primroses.

2. LITTLE MAIDEN. Brangaena !

*[She gradually appears up the side of the
vessel. As she steps on board she sees
TRISTAN and ISEULT. The primroses
drop on the deck.]*

VOICE OF SAILOR (below). Heigh there, be quick !

1. LITTLE MAIDEN. We shall be rowed ashore !
 The salt grass must be lit with primroses,
 And dances on about the hostelry.
 Joy !

2. LITTLE MAIDEN. You are white, Brangaena,
 as a ghost.
*[She waves them away. They get down with
 cries and laughter.]*

BRANGAENA. —But she is in his bosom ;
 But they are lovers, and King Mark abused . . .
 The flask ! . . . Iseult, Iseult !
 She lifts her head and smiles. O royal mother,
 Whose prayers pursue our sailing ! . . .
[Coming close.]
 Woe is me,

Sir Tristan, at this sight.

TRISTAN. I have no sorrow,
 No shame to call upon.
 The whirr of pinions,
 Strong as the elements, is all I hear
 When mortal voice condemns me.

BRANGAENA. O betrayed,
 I do not speak your condemnation ; never
 May I accuse . . .

TRISTAN. Brangaena,
 Death could not part us ! Is there anything,
 O God Thyself, could part us ?

BRANGAENA. There is nothing.
*[She turns away and stands on the scatter of
 primroses.]*

This empty vessel let the cloistering sea
Shut up for ever ! . . .

[*She throws the goblet to the waves.*
Sunken, and for ever.

SCENE II

*The next morning. On the coast of Cornwall the
Castle of Tintagel can be seen from the ship*

ISEULT and BRANGAENA

ISEULT. What shall I do ? The ship is steering fast ;
And all that frown of moonlight on the stream !
The ship is sailing. Yonder, see, the land
That will engulf me.

BRANGAENA. You are sick for sleep.
It is the sea engulfs.

ISEULT. If I could plunge
Back in the sea ! I know the magic call,
Would bring the great wave Cleena, in a rush,
To plight me back again to my own land !
O Erin, Erin !

BRANGAENA. Tell me, royal heart,
What is your grief, for if there be a way
To lighten or remove it. . . .

ISEULT. Ah, you love !
Brangaena, I have passed my bridal-night.
How great the dawn is ! I would be alone,
And watch the birds : but Tristan and his men

Prepare a litter that shall carry me
There, up that awful fastness, to King Mark.

BRANGAENA. If I can serve Iseult, Iseult's Iseult. . . .

Enter KURVENAL

KURVENAL. Sir Tristan prays
That you put on your royal robes.

[He bows and retires.]

ISEULT. Brangaena !

BRANGAENA (*kissing her*). Beloved, the darkness of
your wedding night

Be mine, the shame.

Give me the royal robes.

*[She wraps ISEULT in them. TRISTAN is seen
advancing ; ISEULT moves toward him.]*

For any man would gladly die for her :

I can do more. And all that we can do,

No matter what its name of infamy,

Is to be done, that in this checking world

Some may be free and proud.

How steep a coast !

SCENE III

*Tintagel. KING MARK'S bridal chamber ; it has
darkened windows. The chime rings out three
o'clock.*

VOICE OF MARK. Wine. . . .

VOICE OF BRANGAENA. I will bid them bring
the bridal-cup,
As is the custom.

VOICE OF MARK. O warm voice, that settles
 Down on my heart a dove ! Iseult, I thank
 Thy modesty that made our marriage-night
 Dark as the gulf from which our lives were drawn.
 Thou hast brought round me the abyss again,
 And I am new created.

She is gone.

Iseult, Iseult,
 Iseult ! Where art thou ? Only in thy arms,
 Only against thy lips I dare descend
 Unsealed infinitude. My own, come back !

VOICE OF ISEULT. But I am here.

VOICE OF MARK. You vanished, and the marvel
 Began of very darkness in eclipse.

VOICE OF ISEULT. The bridal-cup.

[*Enter TRISTAN with torch and wine-cup. ISEULT
 is seen, amid her golden hair, sitting by MARK,
 who has risen from his couch.*]

MARK. My Tristan . . . but how ghostly,
 And trembling ! Ah, it is a new-wrought valour
 That must reveal itself beneath the flambeau
 Of awful Love. You quail. . . . May Heaven
 exalt you

One day secure beneath that noble sanction
 That casts out fear. Tristan, those tides of
 blood,

That stain you like the wine-cup in your hand,
 Will rush then undismayed.

TRISTAN (*to ISEULT*). The goblet—drink !

ISEULT. Your nephew blunders. No, Sir Tristan.

MARK. Dearest,
 Your lips must touch the wine. Henceforth
 your beauty
 Touches all acts and modes that had before
 No gist, nor any matter.

ISEULT. Let me drink.

It is unseasoned wine ?

MARK. From Italy ;

The Emperor's gift.

ISEULT. Pure vintage !

(She drinks.) To my lord,
 [She passes the cup to him.]

My husband.

MARK. O Iseult, to thee, to thee !

My soul's soul, O my bride !

Henceforth I shall approach you, think of you

With such devotion as I give my God ;

You are the thing divine in all our earth

I love or ever can. *[He drinks.]*

ISEULT. Now, of your kindness,

Let me withdraw myself among my women.

MARK. By the great Queen of Love, my queen can
 rule

Her time, her favour, everything.

Look, Tristan.

Our queen sweeps back a train of tresses : surely

They were not thus unbound a while ago.

ISEULT. I let them loose to hail you, when the torch-
 light

Should cover me, for I would be all golden

A queen's first morning.

MARK. Child, thy voice is proud,
Imperious, not the voice that sank on me
But lately in the darkness, like a dove.
Iseult, thy beauty is so vehement,
I would the dark still hid it from my eyes :
They are too humble to receive it, seeing
Its prodigy.

A kiss for our first dawn !
What, cold as dawn ? I shall believe the night
Glow with the hidden sun,
That chills at sunrise. There, Iseult, go forth
To thy own chamber, if thou wilt, and leave me !
The day I knew my crown was more familiar
To my belief than this of thy submission
Toward one who worships from so far away.

*[She stumbles against the wine-cup he has
thrown down.]*

ISEULT. The cup ! *[She takes it up and laughs.]*

On board your ship I saw a woman
Take such a cup as this and throw it forth
To seas submerged beneath the sea.

(To TRISTAN.) You saw it

Inclosed where none can stretch ? *[Exit.]*

MARK *(to TRISTAN)*. Am I not happy ?

I am, I am !

*[The KING draws TRISTAN, who kneels, into
his arms.]*

Beloved, how strange to think
You, in your youth, by mad adventure, won me
This eminence to have her as my wife.

My full, undreamed perfection thou didst dream
 For me, so long austere and unimpassioned
 I could not even imagine destiny
 As you were bent to flush it on my years.
 I cannot give you thanks—nay, but thanksgiving,
 As if you were not mortal. O Beloved,
 In this, that thou hast wrought no heaviness
 Must fall on thee. Thou must not doubt my love,
 Because I love so well the guest thou drewest
 Beside my heart's fire. We are ever fast.
 And if I have no child thou art my heir

[TRISTAN *makes a rejecting movement.*
 To Cornwall and to Ireland.

Tristan—nay !
 How have I hurt thee ? Thou art jealous, see'st
 Thy kingdoms put in danger by espousals
 God grant may never injure thee ? O Tristan,
 My joy has privilege
 That none should sorrow near it.

TRISTAN. There have been
 But you and I together . . . Mark, forgive !

MARK. I cannot sing as you—I love all music ;
 And you have ever drawn to unison
 My moods and your avouchment of my moods.
 You know I love you, Tristan. Do not fail me,
 Nor contravene your work.

TRISTAN (*freeing himself from MARK'S arms*). How
 dare I ask you

To pardon ? It is destined—my offence . .
 For all is harsh in this new intercourse ;

And you have found I am o'er-taken jealous.
 We were together, you and I ; we trusted
 The loyalty of every hour we breathed
 That nothing was between us through all time.
 Show me a little grace. . . . The twilight comes
 That will be day : the torch is spent. . . . I
 weary.

Dismiss me from your presence !

MARK. With no word
 Of salutation from my only friend ;
 No kiss from my most-loved through many years ?

TRISTAN (*with a cry*). Mark !

*[He suddenly and coldly goes to take up the
 flambeau.]*

MARK. Nay, but, Tristan, this is grave—most cruel,
 Unjust ; for you have changed my life, not I.
 Yet it is changed. A mighty tide is setting
 Against its common stream, of such invasion
 And roll of flood, your doubt of me, your discord
 Are swept as nothing to the wilderness
 Of the thronged currents, with their scurf of speed,
 As I have seen at efflux of the waters :
 Even such predominance of change hath
 happened
 Beyond the power of you, even you, to check.
 Let in the day !

Your thoughts are strange, perverse.

Sleep ! You will own me in your heart again.

TRISTAN. God bless the king !

MARK. O Tristan, leave me !

TRISTAN (*as if to himself, taking the torch*). Almost
Burnt out to ash—gone out.

MARK. I will let in

The day. Go to your couch.

[*The light of the torch drops.*

TRISTAN. The flame is dead.

ACT II

SCENE I

An ante-room in the Castle of Tintagel, with steps leading up to the Presence-Chamber, shut from sight by heavy, purple curtains.

Groups of NOBLEMEN, among them MARJODO, converse and are joined by others from time to time. MELOT sits on the steps reading.

1. NOBLEMAN. At last the revels end !

2. NOBLEMAN. Our Queen disordered
The daily ceremonial : to-day
We give Time all his customary dues,
And hour by hour his age's privilege.

1. NOBLEMAN. Is it the Queen ?

MARJODO. I scarcely think it is :
She gives such generous changes to the blood ;
Her laughter is as little summer gales.
She alters us
As April alters—'Tis her coming hither.

3. NOBLEMAN. If I may speak, this Queen is full of
peril.

4. NOBLEMAN. Well said—your wisdom, of your
years.

MARJODO. Ha, ha !

I. NOBLEMAN. It is Sir Tristan's coming.

YOUNG NOBLEMAN (*to MELOT*). Aquitaine,

What is it ? Tell us !

MELOT (*glancing from the page of his small book*). Our
great pelicans

Have fled the haunt they lorded 'mid the fowls.

It is the reason of their flight.

OLD NOBLEMAN. Your wisdom !

Well, you are short of stature ; and beside

No gossip ! But the wind, my lords, I hear

Was rough and opposite . . . there is a whisper

They put to shore and in a primrose-wood

Tarried one starlit evening.

MARJODO. Hist ! Sir Tristan !

[*They all grow silent. TRISTAN is
about to fall into one of the groups
silently — then he starts and looks
round.*]

TRISTAN. What do I interrupt, what colloquy ?

There is no need for silence when I enter,

For nothing Cornwall's nobles can discuss

Could be of languid interest to my ear.

MELOT. We glorify the Queen.

TRISTAN. How natural !

Until those curtains may be drawn aside

And all the heaven

Of her full beauty shine on us.

I. NOBLEMAN. Devout !

2. NOBLEMAN (*on the outside of the group round*

TRISTAN). But look — some angry apparition chides.

Enter ISEULT by side-door

ISEULT. Tell me, fair nobles—I am much perplexed
By the dark-thridding stairways of this strange,
Enchanted castle. . . . I have found myself
Almost within the dungeons. . . . Urgently
I seek Sir Tristan.

MARJODO (*turning*). In the dungeons, lady ?

ISEULT. Oh, everywhere ! I am quite wearied out.

1. NOBLEMAN. Have patience, madam ; we are waiting here

To do you homage.

MARJODO. Is it secret-sweet

The reason of your search ? Breathe it to me,
And word for word. . . .

TRISTAN (*parting the crowd round him*). My Queen,
your kinswoman

Must be reproved for this.

2. NOBLEMAN. Ho, ho, his charge,
Confided to Brangaena, and she slips !
But she is lovely now, not veiled in purple,
Not deeply hooded.

Take our homage, Queen,
To you alone, here standing in our midst.
Your pleasure shall in all be ours.

[*Turning their backs to the Presence-Chamber, they all kneel to ISEULT.*

ISEULT.

Sir Tristan,

How ill it is these nobles are not slaves ;
Then we had taught them manners. But, Sir
Tristan,
You do me wrong : it is not yet the hour,
Though close upon the hour, Brangaena sets
The crown upon my head. I sought you simply
To choose our music at the feast to-night.
Marjodo bade me choose it, and I could not ;
Marjodo bade me to consult the king,
I would not, knowing you are all to him,
Attuning all his lays.

TRISTAN. That now is changed.
My harp will have but little use ; the king
In you has harmony so far more wondrous
Than I can weave into his dreams. I thank you
For your great courtesy. All that the throne
Commands me I obey.

Marjodo, take
The Queen back to her chamber.

ISEULT (*to the nobles*). Keep your knees.
You have wrought much offence. Pardon, Sir
Tristan ;
My royal Irish manners are too plain
For this small, ceremonious land. But later,
When we are Queen, ourselves will breathe the
rule.

Marjodo ! [*Exit with MARJODO.*]

NOBLES (*to TRISTAN*). May we rise ?

2. NOBLEMAN. Are you appointed
The Queen's new seneschal ?

4. NOBLEMAN. My lords, you see
We are sold back to Ireland.

TRISTAN. If enslaved,
Enslaved to Beauty.

Pass before your king.
At noon, in full assembly, he proposes
To read to you, his vassals, from his throne,
By how sure titles I have won you Ireland.
The curtains open : pass before your king.

[MARK and ISEULT are seen on their
thrones, MARJODO and BRANGAENA
in attendance.

I. NOBLEMAN (to TRISTAN). Then you are not a
courtier ?

TRISTAN. To your duty !
Pass, pass !

[The Nobles enter the Presence-Chamber
ceremoniously. The great purple cur-
tains fall together.

O infinite, great Powers, O Light
Of Heaven, save her ! She has struck among us
As fatal as a goddess.

That Marjodo
Has a sleek eye ; he taunted me this morning,
Said he had tracked my steps : I thwarted him ;
But as the fury rushed up to her face
Concentred on his visage, I took note
He twitched and writhed aside. Has he
betrayed ?

My bed-fellow, my early friend, my trusted,

But not quite trusted, friend ; my little rival,
My imitator, and, in every wrangle,
Jealous, back-biting foe.

Iseult, I dreamed
Of drawing you away, of roving far
Across the seas : but you are framed a Queen,
And must be as the terrible white sapphire
Before your people. All my sanctity
Shall be to hold you white upon your throne.
Iseult !

*[He sits on a bench at the side, with
head bowed on his hands. The great
curtains of the Presence-Chamber are
swept apart by KING MARK. He
drops them and stands before them
as they close.]*

MARK. Tristan, look up.

Away from me, away.

Tristan, a breath
Of evil rumour has come near the Queen ;
A buzz is in the crowd.

There are no weapons
But prayer and vigilance.

Tristan, no more
You may attend the Queen.

We must protect
Her senses from this slander ; eye and ear
Will soil, if she suspect that any brain
Conceives of her save as an angel moving
Among us.

You attend the Queen no more.

Melot will serve her.

TRISTAN.

Mark, the infamy

You fix on me ! Do you not feel the blow ?

[MARK turns sharply away : the purple
curtains fall behind him.

SCENE II

Tintagel. The QUEEN'S chamber. At the back a door, wide open, gives on a little stream that runs past.

BRANGAENA is sitting with ISEULT in her lap.

ISEULT'S hair is shed round her.

ISEULT. I am so weary ; but what rest I find

With thee ! Brangaena, I have heavenly news,

Tidings, how wonderful ! There are

No tidings I can give thee for thyself :

There thou art like a mother, blessèd one.

[*Patting BRANGAENA'S cheeks.*

My news ! King Mark is going from his court,

Is going, for seven days, on pilgrimage.

That is to me as if he said to-morrow

Winter is dead, to-morrow

The plague, the sickness of my days have end.

Tristan is sick—no matter !—for they leave him

Safe at Tintagel, and my touch can heal.

I shall not see him, as for weary weeks,

In state, while I have bent from clustered
sapphires

Of mordant black, down from my throne, my
ermine,

My majesty above him, as a goddess

His eyes are dreams of—his unbearable,

Gold eyes. . . . My triumph! Now I shall be mortal.

And he my god. Why do you pale? O blessèd,

Love guards us : we are following some law

As irresistible as when through havoc

Of flames and raid the orchard-trees come out,

And smile on all the world.

Enter MARK

MARK. There is a rumour,
My Queen, that thou art sick. Our fair Brangaena
Lacks in no service?

ISEULT. Press your hand across
My forehead ; do not speak to me.

MARK. Most precious
To tend you thus !

ISEULT. It soothes me.

MARK. Sweet, I come
To bid farewell, come unexpectedly,
The hour forgotten.

ISEULT. Look for no farewell.

You are deserting me, or for a hunt,
Or God, it makes no matter. [*With closed eyes.*
Mark, my husband,

You should be gentle to me, for at whiles
 I mourn for my own country, and a madness
 Comes over me so bitter in its strength
 I fain would die. You did not woo me, Mark ;
 I missed your wooing.

MARK. But I never take
 The least caress save as you give me leave.
 I am your lover, and you free, Iseult ;
 [Suddenly binding her wrist with his hand.
 Though the least freedom you should take,
 Iseult,
 Iseult, would plunge me
 Into sheer hell : that is your liberty.
 [She sways, and he draws her to his
 breast.

Brangaena, keep all noise from her.

ISEULT *(opening her eyes and springing to her feet)*.
 Deserted !

Go, I will ask no reason : then at least
 Ask thou no reason, but give ear with speed
 To my request : leave me not in the power,
 Not for a day, an instant, of Sir Tristan.

MARK *(bending to look in her eyes)*. He has offended
 thee ?

ISEULT. Let him be absent
 Long as my lord is absent !

MARK. If it please you,
 When I return I will send Tristan back
 To his own land, to Parmenie.

ISEULT. Oh, has he

A country of his own, and is it far ?
 How good to have a country one may hide in,
 When one is bitter chidden of one's Queen
 And hated !

MARK. Dearest !

ISEULT. Banish him, forsake me—

What will your life be, Sire, without us twain ?

MARK. A desert. I am going to a desert . . .

I told you.

ISEULT. Sire, why will you go away ?

Why will you draw

This misery upon us ?

MARK (*scrutinising her as she kneels*). For my peace.
[Exit.

ISEULT. He loves me as a mortal in the talons
 Of Jove's own bird ; he plants the grip of
 love ;
 None could remove his passion, naught in the
 world.

Divert its set toward me, its jealousy.

*[Arrested by BRANGAENA, who has not
 moved since she kept her eyes fixed in
 terror on KING MARK.]*

You stand white-faced before me and you
 tremble . . .

I am gone mad ! He praises you, your voice——

BRANGAENA (*rousing herself*). Hush ! I must braid
 your hair.

ISEULT. Let it alone !

The king looks long on it.

BRANGAENA. It must be twisted

Thus, with your crown.

ISEULT (*looking into BRANGAENA'S eyes, as she twists her hair*). You take authority?

BRANGAENA. To braid your hair as queens must weave their braids.

ISEULT. So chill and distant! If you will not speak,

If we no more are sisters, but divided . . .

Tristan read to me of the placid queen,

Great Juno—softly she leaned up against

The thunder-bolts, a female Jupiter:

Yet in the Latin there were many fables

Of how she could not brook through all the heavens

That any woman should have eyes of Jove

To bathe her eyes in. So I am a Queen.

O Citheronia, they have not known me,

Nor am I come to strength!

BRANGAENA. By my soul's saving,
Of the love-philtre not a dew-drop's droplet
Has touched my lips.

ISEULT. But you have stately motions,
A royal carriage. You at least I banish.
Go, fetch me Melot here!

BRANGAENA. Iseult!

ISEULT. Fetch Melot.

[*Exit BRANGAENA.*]

O little stream,

Flowing around my chamber, flowing, flowing,

And never taking heed, how good to watch
The catkins as they tumble in the waves ;
To see them lift and drop and float away
And be forgotten.

How I love the tides,
And ebb and flow, and variable winds,
That carry through their storms and rock to
peace.

[*Perceiving MELOT, who has entered quietly.*
O Melot, are you there ?

You are a dwarf ;
'Tis terrible to face you ; and you see
To the bottom of my heart.

You read the stars :
You read them ; they are silent. Though you
speak

No word to me, I lie
Under your searching quiet, as the lambs
Lie under moonlight. Melot, succour me !

MELOT. I come, with numbered and fore-trodden
steps,

To you, a dwarf who frightens you, as all
Initiation frightens. . . . In the dark
I saw Brangaena leave your bridegroom's
chamber,

Saw you and Tristan spill the bridal-wine
On the way thither as the morning flushed.

ISEULT. Then it were good indeed that she were
dead !

Death is so quiet.

[*Throwing herself at MELOT'S feet.*

I love Sir Tristan : he is all I am.

two paths

For every soul the limitless, great stars
Deign to brood over in their energy
To keep the rhythm of : they thread the crowd,
And, for the rest, attune, attune, attune.

Its crying death is in me. Melot, Melot,
My madness—for I bade the king myself
Exile Sir Tristan, far as he can exile,
To Parmenie, or where
The world drops in the sea.

Now I must perish

not . . .

You stand up in my chamber, as if sent
And interposing. Give me sight of him!—

You are a sorcerer—I ask not how,
Nor what shall happen, nor the consequence.
I must see Tristan, as the day must dawn,
As the stars must break through.

MELOT. O rigorous !

You know but one inevitable thing,
One moving power : so chaos in its atoms
Conceived the void, till one
More subtle and elusive shape prevailed,
And by persuasive ritual fell aside,
Parted the elements and gave them paths.

[Advancing nearer.]

You must sway Tristan, and in Love's own
name ;

In Love's own name, too, you must sway King
Mark :

It is inevitable to your husband
To love : he has a god's content in you.
Keep these inevitable loves from clash,
Unless you are a woman-fiend and care
But for the dance of chaos. Will you perish—
You, Tristan, Cornwall ? You can wreck the
kingdom !

Or will you learn of me the circumspection,
And the wide glance that takes account of
all ?

ISEULT. What would you have me do ?

MELOT. It is his patience
Alone that builds and constitutes a god ;
But you are playing

A victim's part, for you are irreligious,
And so the victim of your destiny.

ISEULT. I will learn of you ; I will heed your
counsel.

MELOT. Pass through the orchard to your lover,
pass,

For seven nights, and on the eighth desist :
I will provide you meet in secrecy.

When the king comes back from his pilgrimage,
Hungred from fast, be loyal to his peace.

Farewell. [Exit MELOT.

ISEULT. I feel as some divinity
Hove into sight. Tristan is gay, is sad—
I only thought of loving him, and not
Of keeping all the elements in poise.

[*She sighs deeply.*

The orchard ! And he said to-night,
And seven nights . . . [Closing her eyes.

The rest is sky, is air,
Is immaterial. There are all the worlds !

SCENE III

An orchard in moonlight

MARK and MARJODO enter stealthily. MARJODO
climbs one of the apple-trees

MARJODO. Sire, it is here we spy.

MARK. Here that we watch.

MARJODO. In moonlight

As clear as this ? Sire, we shall be surprised.

MARK. What could the moon look down on of so vile

As a king hiding stealthy in the dark ?

It is the deadliest sin.

But whence that rain ?

The flower-leaves of the orchard showering down

In moonlit bevvies from each shaken branch ? . . .

MARJODO. Hist, hist ! Climb quick !

MARK. I am built deep in night,
And but in peril as the guilty are.

[*Perceiving ISEULT at a distance.*

O sweet-paced steps !

I will learn of her why so guilelessly

She thrids the orchard. . . .

[*ISEULT starts, perceiving the shadows of MARK and MARJODO thrown by the moon behind them.*

ISEULT. Holy Trinity,
Threefold of Love, protect me !

MARK. She is moved,
Even as I ; something she apprehends,
Yet simply and with prayer more confident
Than I have ever lifted to my God
Waits the event.

MARJODO. Look yonder ! (*pointing to TRISTAN*).

[*TRISTAN perceives the shadows and stops :*
ISEULT draws slightly back.

MARK. Tristan ! So I paused before
The mortal Venus when I saw her first.
I cannot see her : in his face I see . . .
Oh, push the boughs aside !

TRISTAN (*advancing*). How should I speak?

ISEULT. Speak not, there is no need.
Sir Tristan, I was come to chide with you.
O ghost, O misery, so wan thou art,
So haggard and unfriendly in thy motions,
Thou frightest me. How should I chide with
death?

TRISTAN. Chiding ! Peace, peace !

I cannot suffer chiding 'twixt us twain.
Only receive my prayer—I have a prayer,
That you must make. . . . I would not curse
 my king,
For I am dying, for he is thy lord . . .
But pray him, thou,
Fair morning sun of thy fair mother's dawn,
Stricken of him to devastate the heavens,
And cast a thwarting light upon the earth,
Pray him have patience with me, give me leave
To tarry on my bed a little while :
I am too sick to journey. I should die
As unespied and secret as the birds
That leave a little voidness in the woods,
And have no funeral.

ISEULT (*steading herself against a tree-trunk*). Remember this,

Sir Tristan, it is I that banished you.

I am so jealous, I had slain Brangaena—
He praised her ; and from me you take your
death.

TRISTAN. You will live on, trample the slander
out.

ISEULT (*turning resolutely away*). I shall live on and
very slowly die. [*She disappears.*]

TRISTAN (*treading on MARK'S shadow*). Would I
were dead or he ! [*Exit.*]

MARK. Go hence, Marjodo ;
Deceiver, hence, before my tears are hot
As Iceland's fountains.

MARJODO. If I were mistaken . . .

MARK. Go hence, Marjodo. Leave me !
[*Exit MARJODO.*]

O my God,

I am no more Thy hermit, if my wife
Is jealous of me ; and for me she lets
That lovely knighthood fall into the dust.
She is gone back alone to her lone bed,
Her tears, her jealousy.

O Moon, you saw,
You saw that she was chaste ; but better
far,

Dearer, of more account, in accusation
Confounding me, and yet more infinite
In solace to my heart—that she is jealous !

SCENE IV

*Tintagel. The Queen's Chamber**ISEULT is looking forth toward the shrine of
St. Neot's**Enter MARK*

MARK. Not there, Iseult !

The pilgrim is returned, peace in his heart.

How hast thou passed the time ?

ISEULT (*turning*).

In idleness,

Undeserved sorrow.

MARK.

Blessèd be the grief

That gives me sight at last of dropping tears.

You came to me fore-fated as my Queen,

Passive and even-eyed . . . I find you sorrowful,

I find you watching even as a wife

Is sorrowful and watches. O Beloved !

[He takes her hand.]

Still speechless in your welcome, still resentful !

Iseult, you cannot know the awful worship

Your husband has in hoard for you. My pearl,

Found flawless, inconceivable the joy,

The dazzled avarice of possessing you.

ISEULT. My lord, I have a suit.

MARK.

No suit, Iseult.

For thyself freedom ; for me ignorance

In all thy pleasure. Give me now such news,

Such confidences as your prompting heart
Craves to disburthen.

RESULT. Tristan is fallen sick.

The suit I have from him

Is that you give him grace for seven days
To gather strength, and afterwards to leave

The court, the land for ever, no suspicion

Clouding your honour. This he prays for both.

MARK (*withdrawing his hand*). Tristan is innocent.

Let there be peace between us !

[He speaks to MELOT at the door, then
returns to the QUEEN.]

ISEULT. There is more,

A suit that is my own. You have put peril

Between me and Sir Tristan, names, imaginings

He cannot bear for me, nor I for him.

I love your knight . . . and I would take my love

Back to my mother, to the Queen Iseult.

[*She weeps.*]

MARK. If these are lovers,

And would not wrong me, but are doomed to love !

So at the shrine

My heart was softened, so as in a vision

One instant I beheld.

Enter TRISTAN ; *he has his bow and quiver. He advances to* MARK

See, Tristan, see !

I have so wronged her that she prays for exile

For ever from me.

TRISTAN. Sire, you are confused ;
I pray for exile.

MARK. All men flee from me !
Why do you pray for exile ?

TRISTAN. You have fixed
At last suspicion on her.

MARK (*after a long, remorseful gaze on ISEULT*).
Tristan, Tristan,

The wrong that I have done you is but little—
The jest, the tragedy 'twixt man and man :
I have been jealous.

Tristan, take the charge
Of the Queen's chamber, be her constant guardian,
Among the courtiers be her constant courtier,
Win her again to pardon me. Remain !
For I indeed must pass to solitude ;
I have done outrage to the common air,
And know not what the gods will do with me.

[*Exit MARK.*

[*ISEULT rises and turns with lightning-like
rapidity to MELOT.*

MELOT. I watch no more.
But, Queen, be circumspect !

[*Exit.*

[*As ISEULT passes TRISTAN, her robe
brushes against him : suddenly he
catches her to his arms.*

ISEULT. Oh, give me speech,
Beloved . . . at least your eyes ! I cannot bear
The blackness of this ecstasy. Oh, let me
Look on you—still the russet hair, and all

The rest sunk into winter. Dear, dear winter,
Grown wintry for Iseult. Where hast thou been,
These days, these nights
We have not been together ?

Speak to me !

Have you been dying ?

TRISTAN (*shudders*). With the shadows. Oh,
Speak not ; I heard thee in the orchard speak.
Scan me not ; in the orchard thou didst scan.
Give thyself to me !

ISEULT (*she caresses him, puts her arm round him,
and whispers*). Seven nights, beloved,
He promised us ; the first we were betrayed ;
The first will be to-night.

TRISTAN. Then day be night !
Oh, how I suffer, when by day and night
For days and nights we are but to ourselves,
Not to each other ; and the sun goes out
Sighing, and eve is as a farewell groan.
Give thyself to me now.

ISEULT (*laying her head on TRISTAN'S bosom*). Be
merciful,
And comfort me. Was not my wit a lanthorn
Thrown on the shadows ? And the dwarf . . .
Beloved,
You must praise Melot, who so tenderly
Contracts us, who has promised us seven nights,
To-night the first.

TRISTAN. I bid you trust not Melot.
Brangaena——

ISEULT.

Ho !

Name not Brangaena ; thou hast kissed her cheek ;
She told me, and I slapped it.

TRISTAN.

For her service

I kissed her, for her great fidelity.

ISEULT. There is no more Brangaena ! But this
dwarf,

Who is no dwarf, Melot the sorcerer,
The something like a whisper in one's speech,
The smallness of a creature made so fine,
Of such gold-dust and deep-welled gems, the bulk
Cannot, with all the worlds to make, be large,
He serves me : I must kiss him on the cheek
For his fidelity.

TRISTAN.

O breaking smile !

Do anything you will.

ISEULT.

I shall keep Melot.

TRISTAN. To see you smile ! Would we were simple
lovers !

Could you but shine upon me, and, rejoiced,
The world take light about us, as when lovers
Are seen and watched and passed with kindness by.
Iseult, it is our curse,
We cannot live through the sweet daylight hours
With kisses, little moments of offence,
Misgivings and delights of wrangling love.
We cannot ; therefore we must wipe away
The memory of those blinking moonlit trees,
The stalking-horse, the unreality.
Give me thyself, let me breathe warm again ;

Give me thy sighs to lay upon my heart,
Now in the noon, the sun at blaze on us,
The friendly sun. . . .

God's grace, another shadow !

[*He points to the form of MARJODO thrown on a piece of linen veiling the window. ISEULT points to his bow and fixes the arrow when the bow is brought. TRISTAN shoots, and the long arrow passes whistling through the Shadow's head.*]

ISEULT (*looking forth*). Triumph ! The slandering
face is stiffened. Bring me,
Love, in a wallet, these marauding heads.
My hunter !

(*Embracing him.*) Swift, give him swift burial.
Say, do I love thee fierce or in a dream ?

[*TRISTAN lets himself stealthily down from the window, watched by ISEULT.*]

SCENE V

Wild, marish country beyond the orchard

MELOT *is laying the last spadefuls of earth*
on MARJODO's body

TRISTAN *stands by with a torch*

MELOT. Your lamentations will raise up the ghosts.

TRISTAN. He has been faithful to his king ; in duty
Confided his suspicions.

MELOT. If this fen
 Were a wide burial for his kind, the earth
 Would very soon give hint of paradise.
(Stamping more vigorously.) Were the earth cleared
 of these,
 The slandering, inventive, slippery tongues—
 No need of other remedy—I tell you
(And the stars oft have dropped their dew on me),
 That very soon, as in a toward spring,
 A freshness would draw on across the earth :
 There would be no more plague, but natural
 Afflictions, sorrow ; at last, balmy death.

TRISTAN. I should be buried by his side.

MELOT. Sir Tristan,
 Go to your lady's side ; there is your place.
 The grave is not for lovers.

TRISTAN *(going, but looking back at MELOT)*. Curse
 you, dwarf !

Where is your loyalty ? *[Exit into the orchard.]*

MELOT *(leaning on his spade and looking up)*. I serve
 the stars.

ACT III

SCENE I

A terrace, approached above from the castle by a central flight of steps, and communicating with an unseen courtyard below by other flights of steps.

The BISHOP of THAMES and NOBLEMEN

BISHOP. Softly, softly, my lords ! Our queen is a very gracious queen ; a stranger, but a gracious queen. She is well beloved of the king ; so is Melot well beloved of the king and Sir Tristan well beloved of the king. Then, where is the offence ? If my sovereign came to me—as often he unbosoms himself—with any fear that his gladness and his honour were attainted, I should have patience with your complaining. But the king comes to me always as a very humble penitent, in remorse for his frequent impatience. What is ill with the land ? Marjodo has been slain by wild beasts, as who may not be, traversing so wild a country. The king has restored Sir Tristan to favour—and in favour let him remain, till the birth of an heir make the court tedious to him, and he seek fresh adventure.

I. NOBLEMAN. We will not have heirs of his begetting.
 BISHOP. I will not have slanders of your begetting.

Go home, my lords ; look each one after his own household. 'Tis the hour for my Office. Go !

[The lords retire and talk at the top of the left descending flight of stairs.]

And so fair a woman, even as the holy women of old—full of beauty and graciousness, innocent in her husband's eyes and beloved.

[Looking round at the autumn birds.]

It is well, O my soul, thou canst fly—fly away and be at rest with thy God !

[He becomes lost in his Office. The lords descend and pass below the terrace. After a while KING MARK enters : the BISHOP rises and salutes him.]

Good-morrow, Sire !

MARK. O Churchman,

There is a marvellous sweet peace upon you.

BISHOP. I would extend it, for it is God's peace.

Nor is it from smooth fountains that this current

Flows and makes fruitful : it must well within.

MARK. Ay, Holy Writ ! God's peace is for the dying,

And for the very old. . . .

Your punishment

For blasphemy against the Holy Ghost ?

BISHOP. Death, and by flame.

MARK. . . . My Queen is more indulgent.

Oh, I am happy ! She absolves so clean
She startles me.

BISHOP. She has a royal gift.

[*The PRIEST returns to his Office : KING
MARK looks out. TRISTAN comes down
the steps and stands behind him.*

MARK (*as he feels TRISTAN'S touch on his shoulder*).

The birds are settling on our coast in troops,
Before they traverse ocean. Look, yon horseman
Rides through an empty field ;
Yet in an instant something of the air
Rises from out its sod ; black pinions dazzle
His horse and the whole sky : another instant
There is dead field again.

TRISTAN. I love the autumn,
Its air and golden trees that fall away,
And pinions borne abroad.

MARK. Is it your name
That sadly so inclines you ? 'Twas a pang
When first you told your name—so glad a child,
With branch of linden in your curly hair,
Tucked close behind your ears, the blossoms
jigging
About your forehead, as you taught my men
The wood-craft of the Parmenois. My Tristan,
I think you are full happy ?

TRISTAN. It is joy.

MARK. What is ?

TRISTAN. This autumn, and once more your favour.

MARK. Such verity is in your voice—I know

That verity ! Yes, it is good to crackle
 The crystal oak-leaves in the gritty snow ;
 'Tis good to watch your fingers that so deftly
 Uncase, then clean the stag ; and good to listen
 To your ballads by the ingle-nook. Most dearly
 I love you, sweet inheritor. The bracelet
 I clasped upon your wrist for your first song .
 You have not worn of late.

TRISTAN. Since I was ill,
 Yonder in Ireland, it fell forward, tangling
 My readiness of hand.

MARK. King's gifts, king's praises
 So light with you !

VOICES (*below*). Our sovereign ! . . .

MARK. There is clamour.
 Listen ! 'Tis so we hear ourselves accounted
 For what we are to subjects.

TRISTAN (*flinging himself down on a stone seat away
 from the parapet*). As you choose !

A king must take his knowledge as he can.
 Pray God that I may never be a king,
 And lose my joy even in the birds afield !

MARK *moves away to the end of the terrace to the
 left and listens to the murmur below : after a
 few minutes he comes back, looks for an instant
 at TRISTAN ; then goes up straight to the BISHOP
 and seizes his arm.*

MARK. Listen awhile beside me !

VOICES (*raised maliciously below*). We refuse :
 We will not be the servants of a whore.

What did he say—this bishop she has caught ?
Melot is well beloved of the queen,
Tristan is well beloved of the queen,
The king is well beloved of the queen,
And then he laughed . . . a mischief in his eye !
But we will not be governed of a whore.

MARK. You may not listen : I will stop all ears
From such infection. Bishop, this is plague
That you must cure. Leash up these rabble-
tongues ;

Threat them with hell ; or a wide massacre
Will cleanse the purlieus of my palace. Speak !

BISHOP. Sire, you would go to war with sland'rous
tongues ?

Let be, let be ! I will confer with you
In private of this matter. Recollect
Your ear must not be general. Men live
In houses, Sire, not for the warmth, the shelter,
But rather to encase themselves
With the thick deafness of deep-crustéd walls.
The day is fair. Sir Tristan mourns his friend ;
Go, solace him. You took me from my prayers.

MARK. I doubt no more ; nor will I suffer doubt
In any bosom. Not a fiend of hell
But in the secret silence of his heart
Shall feel her as the blowing, smokeless air
He cannot breathe or taint. If you have power—

BISHOP (*shaking his head*). The tongue can never
with the tongue contend :

The issue is dissension.

MARK.

You are helpless !

But if you have no power
 To cleanse my kingdom, then by miracle
 I will draw down on it the heathen wave
 That can submerge a country and leave soft,
 Green fields in chequer on the earth again.
 I have my instruments, and olden magic
 Shall speak her pure, if you have nothing by
 you,
 No flaming minister, no element,
 No king that rides the air.

BISHOP.

The Church is full

Of every potent magic. Truth is truth,
 And can avouch itself without a tongue.
 No heathen wave——

(*With sudden energy*). There is an element !
 Your Queen in face of all shall lift her hand
 Fresh from the hissing iron, free from spot,
 And God make her acquittal absolute.

MARK. The iron !

BISHOP.

Yea, my lord, and not the pyre :

That is your mercy ; there I must reprove.

MARK. Then give my Queen intelligence ; assemble

My lords about her : but it is the Church

I put to proof, if it can silence slander.

TRISTAN (*springing forward*). Oh, vile to her ! The
 branding iron ! Mark,

You dare affright her so ? Ah, would to God
 That I had never borne her from her land,
 Her mother, given this treasure of the world

For you to blemish, with your use, your wearing !
And would you crack the stone.

MARK. If you are heated,
You heat for her the iron that will brand.
Leave your remonstrance !

TRISTAN. For yourself I plead.
Such sin as never she can pardon, such
Offence as brands you ever ! You will murder
Her love for you.

MARK. No : prove her love for you
Need sing no *Miserere*.

TRISTAN. So bewildered !
Unkingly ! Take your titles and be base,
The cuckold of the crowd.

MARK. Good bishop, open
Our counsel to the Queen and bring me word
Of her accordance. I await you here.

[*Exit* BISHOP.]

TRISTAN (*pacing violently up and down the terrace*).
This mummary—O hell of flame !—for fire
Will burn ; there is no miracle to stay it ;
It shrivels little children in their beds,
And sleeping women ; it has no remorse.
Fire !

(*Approaching* MARK.) Better build a beacon
On Cawsand's topmost rocks, there publish her,
Stand by and feed the flames ! If there be gods
Though verily I know not—elements
There are and licking airs—if there be gods,
Yon deed will be arrested : but go forth,

Destroy . . . her that Iseult of Ireland
 Bore as the gracious dawning bears the sun.
 O light of the earth, O fair !

[*Wildly tossing his hands.*

MARK (*who has remained looking toward the central staircase*). How dare you doubt

Of her, or heaven !

TRISTAN. Would a god suffer it ?

If it is suffered, if you put your Queen

To such intolerable, grave affront,

I pray—to those same fiery elements

You conjure, to dishonour you.

[*The KING continues quietly looking toward the staircase, down which ISEULT is seen advancing with a clear and upright carriage.*

MARK (*to ISEULT*). Behold !

Iseult, it is the peril to my peace

I pray you have compassion of.

ISEULT. My lord,

There is no fear in me for any action

That you can put me to. Love of old time

Brought order to the angry elements,

And will assuage all discord.

I obey

This word of yours as if my mother bade me

Pluck herbs in the garden for my fresher health.

Appoint the time.

MARK (*glancing back at TRISTAN, as he kneels on the steps to ISEULT*). Tristan, if there be gods !

SCENE II

*Tintagel : the sea-shore in front of a steep cavern,
a boat moored under a rock*

TRISTAN, *in guise of a pilgrim, is pacing a narrow beach with stupendous cliffs above. He grasps a letter in his hands, and turns and reads and looks to sea.*

TRISTAN. She shall not bear the fire, God's shame
on her !

But I would rather bury her alive.

What means this call to me, this strict command

That I should stain my face, change my apparel,

Become a pilgrim, habited like those

Strange, holy men that met me on these coasts

When first I landed—holy, holy faces,

And carrying the sweets of sanctity

About them in their persons, as the bees

The sugar of the flowers ? She bade me chaunt

In prayers and psalms. I cannot pray for her,

She does defy the heavens too wantonly :

She is profane. But, oh, the *Miserere*

For Tristan—I can sing it with no feint,

[*He chaunts.*

‘ *Miserere mei, Deus, secundum magnam
misericordiam tuam.*

*Et secundum multitudinem miserationum
tuarum, dele iniquitatem meam. . . .’*

How my voice sounds up !
 No wonder ; I am very far away,
 Cut off, cut off, as if the sea
 Closed on me, and I sat within a vault,
 Remembering the birds. No avenue !
 Cut off, cut off !

[ISEULT *has entered the cavern by a secret passage, and for some time has been standing at the cavern's mouth.*

ISEULT. Ah me ! How woe-begone !
 But I forget the part I bade you play,
 A pilgrim.

TRISTAN. I will play no more false parts.
 You must confess—the king will pardon you ;
 I will abjure your magic.

ISEULT (*looking down into a deep tide-pool*). Will you
 drown

Like the void flagon ?

Gaily blows the wind ;
 I cannot drop a tear. ' Iseult, ma mort.'
 Pilgrim, you have forgot your scallop-shell ;
 But I will bind it on.

[*She picks up a scallop from the beach and slips it into the ribbon of his hat, looking into his face.*

' Iseult, ma vie.'

TRISTAN. What would you have me do ? You put
 a hollowness

In all I am. But promise me, before—
 Before we part, you will not face the fire.

ISEULT. Before we part ?

TRISTAN. You go to the Ordeal,

And I, a pilgrim, whither ?

ISEULT. Say, my Tristan,

Where of yourself you wend. Conceive your-
self

Washed up as on my lovely Irish coast,

A stranger——

TRISTAN. Ah, I had not then drunk magic !

I saw thy beauty, and in loyal passion

Besought it for the king : then came the error,

The deadly draught. It is incredible

To Mark his friend should be to him a liar,

Amazing, curious as a miracle

I should betray. He does not hear the trumpets

That blow their triumph through me in his
presence,

Blast of victorious trumpets, the wild curse

With which they catch my heart. . . .

ISEULT. Break, break from this !

God help me ! Such fierce hate is in my heart

To keep thee and to torture thee—a moan

To be avenged. Thou dreamest we are parting ;

But I shall pass from branding iron to fire

Of branding fagots, for I choose the iron.

TRISTAN. Choose to be branded ! All our love will
be

Henceforth as it is written of the brand,

For men to read.

It was a crystal sphere

That swung round to itself. I was within,
 And all the music of the harmony
 That swept it through the heavens was Iseult.
 Oh, it is broken up !

[He buries his face in his hands. ISEULT looks forth, bites her lips, and then speaks very low over TRISTAN.]

ISEULT. There is a service
 I beg of thee, to bear me from the ship,
 Such as thou shalt behold me, vilely clad
 In beggar's weeds, a penitent, to carry
 And lay me on the sands of Caerleon :
 No knight will touch me,
 For every knight feels toward me in his heart
 Even as thou. But with thy scallop-shell,
 Untaintable, a pilgrim, thou shalt bear me
 Fast in thy arms to Caerleon. I entreat.

TRISTAN. For this thou calledst me ?

ISEULT. Yea, holy man.

TRISTAN. For this ?

[He lifts her and bears her a few paces along.]

ISEULT *(as he sets her down)*. Thou wilt slip footing
 on the shore,

I know thou wilt. Meek pilgrims do but rarely
 Strive with such awful burthen in their arms.
 Thou wilt slip footing, fall, we shall be thrown
 Together, side by side, and I shall swear,
 By all the relics and the Holy Rood,
 Iseult has never borne embrace of man
 Save of her lord and this same clumsy pilgrim.

TRISTAN (*embracing and re-embracing* ISEULT). O fine,

O venerable ruse ! Ha, ha !

What triumph for your lover ! Is it thus
That I must hold thee ? I shall grip thee tight
Against the plashing waves. Neptune forbid
That I should kiss thee, though if he contend . . .
Give me full measure now, rain kisses on me !
How brief thy tenderness !

ISEULT. Poor, poor soiled pilgrim !

What dost thou know but Cupid and his arrows,
His vivid little pains, his petulance.
Venus has none of these : her votaries
She aids from secret caverns in the sea,
And wraps them to herself. O Tristan, not
By any guileful speech or crafty lie,
I pass forth to my judges unafraid,
But being upheld by the strong charms of Love,
Of Venus, if you will—these mysteries
Are of the many gods.

Awhile ago

I thought you were too solemn for the hour,
And trifled with you : now in very earnest,
Mingling your hands with mine, I can make
prayer

To God to shield us : Holy Trinity,
Ever to thee, thou threefold light, we turn—
Love, Love, ere we can falter, once more Love !

TRISTAN. Iseult, O queen—oh, silence !

ISEULT. To thine oars !

Thy task is simple. Mine !—oh, recollect

The crown before mine eyes, the vast cathedral,
 The sickness and the shiver in the head.
 If I should fail, or if the jugglery
 Of swearing I have never lain in arms,
 Save of the pilgrim and my lord, were ill
 Approved of heaven——

TRISTAN. Heaven loves thy innocence,
 The king's great faith. And I shall see thy feet
 Bare on the stone, shall see thee in thy smock,
 Trembling for cold, yea, and for modesty,
 I should behold thee thus ; for I shall see thee.
 It is all carven clear before my eyes
 How thou art only mine.

ISEULT. So vast a crowd !

SCENE III

*The Interior of the Minster Church at Caerleon, with
 view of the Choir, the Choir-aisles, and, on the
 north side, of the Sacristy ; on the south side, of the
 little Chapel of St. Mary Magdalen.*

*Relics are being laid on the altar ; the KING'S throne
 is brought in. The BISHOP of THAMES, with
 attendant PRIESTS, enters the Sacristy.*

PRIEST. Then will you put your robes on you, my
 lord ?

BISHOP. It is not yet the hour. Shall we not pray ?

PRIEST. The king is in a marvellous distraction :
 He watched all night.

BISHOP.

I cannot aid the king.

[*To ATTENDANTS who pass with brazier
and bar of iron.*

Stir not so noisily. Remember, caitiffs,
This lady is your queen. Of noble grace
She yields her to the bitter degradation.

[*To others.*

Bear very humbly

This habit of a penitent, this girdle,
Round to St. Mary's Chapel. Churls, remember
The thorns, the nails, the scourge that we adore
Are but adored as they are instrument
Of torture to pure sanctity. Step softly.

[*He kneels. Slowly a crowd begins to fill the
Church. ISEULT and BRANGAENA enter St.
Mary's Chapel. ATTENDANTS set the brazier,
hissing round the iron, before the altar. MELOT
props himself against a column and looks
up.*

MELOT. I wonder . . . Is it in this woman to put
forth the miracle of truth? If she do it, we will
trouble no more for the philosopher's stone.

[*An ATTENDANT approaches him.*

ATTENDANT. We may not disturb the bishop, we
may not disturb the king. Do we set the queen's
throne beside the king's?

MELOT. Assuredly, and lay across the seat
Her golden robes and over them the tarnished
And venerable crown that at her marriage
King Mark set on her head. He will re-crown—

That is the ceremony. Move with care.

[ISEULT *puts aside her regal robes*. BRANGAENA *receives a dark woollen garment and twisted cord from an ATTENDANT* ; then, the penitent's dress in her hand, she watches ISEULT, as if transfixed.

ISEULT. Help me ; my crown is tangled in my hair,
My hair unloops : it must be tightly bound.

Help me . . . I tremble . . . I am not afraid,
Except at bungling. There !

BRANGAENA. You snapt the circlet
With your fierce handling.

ISEULT. There ! The crown, the jewels—
And, see, this little topaz at my heart,
With all my silks and raiment, the brown samite. . .

BRANGAENA. Ay, beauty—

ISEULT. There ! I give them to the poor.

BRANGAENA (*holding the topaz in her hand*). This ?

ISEULT. Oh, how blessèd is the emptiness !

In my hands nothing. Sweet, I cannot wait.

This power is not for ever in my heart.

Help me, unknot this girdle, help, Brangaena !

O mortal cruelty ! How thou art dangling

That topaz . . . Throw it to the jewel-heap ;

And bid them hasten.

BRANGAENA. Let me guard it, Queen :
Not that it is a jewel—for thine heart.

[ISEULT *takes the topaz and flings it away*.

ISEULT. Is Tristan safe ? I shall have need of him

In all the buzz when they are giving thanks.

BRANGAENA. Tristan is fled. Iseult, how cold you are !

How far apart ! Your feet are in my hands ;
I try to chafe them. Think of me a little !
You are not dying : then I know the face
Looks off as it were staring at a sea,
And has no pity ?

Nay, be merciful !

ISEULT (*rubbing her hands together*). But, sweet, I cannot wait :

This power is not for ever in my heart.

Help me, unknot this girdle, help, Brangaena !

[BRANGAENA, *as if waking, dresses her as a penitent*.

BRANGAENA. Though you are dark and humble before God.

Sweet, wild one, yet God knows it is a mask ;
He will not be deceived : you go forth guilty
To the ordeal, and the iron will burn.

[*A pilgrim passes up the south aisle, and enters the choir, brushing MELOT, who slightly shrugs his shoulders*.

ISEULT. Is Tristan safe ? I shall have need of him

In all the buzz, when they are giving thanks.

BRANGAENA. Tristan is fled.

(*Suddenly clasping her knees*.) Iseult, be merciful.
Have mercy on me ! What is Tristan's love ?
He flees. But I am with you at the pyre,
And may not burn beside you. Pity me !

I cannot let you go. There is love
 Of woman unto woman, in its fibre
 Stronger than knits a mother to her child.
 There is no lack in it and no defect ;
 It looks nor up nor down ;
 But loves from plenitude to plenitude,
 With level eyes, as in the Trinity
 God looks across and worships. O my dear,
 To keep you moving in and out my days !
 Let me go forth and to the multitude
 Publish the story of my great neglect ;
 And I will take the iron in my hand,
 And pray that it may burn me to the bone,
 If all I speak before the holy bishop,
 The king and all his lieges, be not true :
 That you are under spell and innocent,
 That you and the lord Tristan are as one,
 Are fashioned to each other, as the cup
 To acorn ; and no other use is yours,
 Or purpose in the world.

ISEULT (*breathing hard*). But where is Tristan ?
 Go, peep into the church. I hear such noises,
 I am turned sick.

[KING MARK *enters and takes his throne.*

Tell me what you behold,
 And if they soon will come to summon us.

[*Exit BRANGAENA into the Church.*

I quail a little, I am very chill.
 If he have shrunk away ! He disappears
 As suddenly as I have heard Tintagel's

Whole fairy fabric falls from tower to base,
As in a dream, at the appointed day.

Re-enter BRANGAENA

BRANGAENA. The king is waiting : he is on his throne ;

He becked me to him, said that he should crown you—

I could have bowed me down upon my knees,
But for an awe. . . . I could have owned my sin,

And wrought you liberation.

ISEULT. He shall crown me.
What saw you, what beside ?

BRANGAENA. Close to the altar
A pilgrim, very fervent at his prayers.
He trembled as I passed him.

ISEULT (*with a low laugh*). At his prayers,
Poor devil !

[*She takes a step toward the Church, then
hastily returns to BRANGAENA.*

Sweet, I will not kiss you now ;
But afterwards. . . .

Come first, for the first kiss.

BRANGAENA (*detaining her*). The bishop is not robed.

ISEULT. The iron glows ;

I have to seize the iron. Follow me.

O Love, Love, Love,

Thou burn'st too hot : the iron will drop cold
And hissing at my feet. Brangaena, you

Have saved me, for your crystal cup it is
Sustains me at this hour. Walk steadily. . . .
You must not stay me. . . . I must walk alone.

[She goes far up the aisle and by the side-door enters the choir, ascends the steps, to the amazement of all, passes TRISTAN, snatches the iron from the brazier, goes back a few steps and waits the BISHOP who, with a procession, advances. In dumb-show the relics are uncovered, a vow is proposed and repeated—at the end of the repetition ISEULT waves her hand toward the pilgrim, praying with hidden face: then in a voice that can just be heard the BISHOP speaks.]

BISHOP. Lay down the iron.

[He descends the steps, with her, lifting her hand.]

See, the hand unscarred.

ISEULT. Brangaena !

[She embraces her.]

Bishop, but this faithful soul

Hath not passed scathless through her agony.

[Looking round.]

I thank you, gentle people, for your prayers ;

[Fixing her eyes on TRISTAN, who has fallen prone on the altar-steps.]

You have remembered how a soul is lonely,
Being accused.

(To BISHOP.) Now lead me to my lord.

[She stands before the KING, who has risen, with clasped hands.]

No speech between us : you have promised triumph.

Crown me !

(To BRANGAENA.) Lay on my robes.

[The BISHOP and KING place the crown on her head. The Church is thrilled with strange music. ISEULT again stoops to BRANGAENA and kisses her : the crowd looks up reverently as to some miracle.]

ISEULT. Belovèd, it is thou and I that hear,
Not that poor pilgrim, thou and I together :
We share the secret. Is it not the same
Sweet singing, as of currents in the air,
That you so oft have told me ravished you
When the little flask was sealed ?

BRANGAENA. It is the same.
[She falls in swoon at ISEULT'S feet.]

ACT IV

SCENE I

The Chapel Courtyard. Tintagel

Early morning in spring

To the right a wing of the Castle, in the centre the Chapel, to the left the QUEEN'S House with an upper window, giving on to a boschage between the House and the Chapel.

KING MARK *stands in the porch of the Chapel : through a side-window he can watch the QUEEN'S window.*

MARK. Sometimes she rests her arms along the ledge

And smiles and looks abroad. That is the greeting

I wait for : all the rest is heaviness.

O eyes, the dearest in the world, that keep

For me December's coldness through spring-tide—

But not for him ! They through their inner-
most blue

Are favouring, and as they dwell on him

They spread into a mercy all may see,

That all do see. But here I watch her smiles

Falling, in spring-tide, on my senseless woods.

[ISEULT *appears at the window.*

So one may catch

A woman's face at rarest, raised to heaven,

Or lighting at some pleasure in herself.

ISEULT (*listening to the birds*). O limpid, it is like the
dew in flower !

Another—ah, that snatches as a scythe

That cuts into a score of varied sweets.

One that is all in silver to itself . . .

Enter TRISTAN, *strolling through the boscaje toward*
the Chapel, whistling bird-notes.

And one—how masterful the melody,

Buoyant and greeting and indifferent !

[*Bending from the window.*

Sweet, O sweet

The voices of the spring, and sweet to hear

The sweetest.

TRISTAN. Queen, that was a common snatch.

Would you were free

To go forth to the woods ; there are such notes

As must be caught in silence.

ISEULT.

Would, ah, would,

Tristan, that we were free !

TRISTAN. I must pray for you,
Taken in such light temptation.

ISEULT (*withdrawing from the window*). To your
prayers !

[TRISTAN *doffs to the QUEEN, then gaily
passes on his way to Matins. At the
Chapel-door he meets MARK.*

TRISTAN (*saluting him*). I am heart-struck with the
day—new-springing day ! . . .

[MARK *sets his hand violently on
TRISTAN'S arm.*

MARK. Tristan——

TRISTAN. Oh, what is this ?

MARK. My pleasure, Tristan ; my resolve ; the
joy

Of hearing you, my minstrel. You have sung
Yourself free of the cage ! I set you loose. . . .
Those penetrating, sovereign notes—why, even
A murderer's heart were softened at their fall.
Go forth, pair in the singing woods. Go forth
Together, true to what you are, together
As paramours !

TRISTAN. I whistled on my way
To Chapel and the Queen arrested me,
And bade me mock the oriole and spoke
Of how sweet freedom is. . . .

ISEULT *comes out of her house to the Chapel, as
the BISHOP of THAMES advances followed by
Priests and Lords. MARK takes ISEULT by
the hand and sets her at TRISTAN'S side.*

MARK. My lords, from you
I ask no counsel : I deliver judgment,
And bid you but be mute.

(*To ISEULT.*) Unhood, unhood,
And let us hear

Your morning music to the sky.

ISEULT (*throwing back her hood and looking up*).
The sky

Is very fair ;
The birds are singing. In my heart I sighed
To be free with them ; and the prayer came fast
For succour in temptation.

THE BISHOP (*taking ISEULT'S hand*). By ordeal
And in God's sight these twain are justified.
Behold this unscarred hand.

A breath's offence,
A moment's mitigation of the harsh
Rigours of duty, a too liberal
Interpretation of the morning's softness,
Are lovable infirmities, and in
Offending youth and beauty no offence.

MARK (*striking ISEULT'S hand out of the BISHOP'S*).
My lords,

I care not now a jot where the truth lies,
Since God says this of them and April that !
We must believe the spring the churchman says—
It is a new religion that exists
Of its own depth and is effectual
Through disallowance. Then believe the spring !
Here is ordeal ! Does the sunlight blast her ?

The birds keep song ; all that is in her heart
 Is full of majesty. Look not so grave ;
 Nothing of this fair beauty shall be marred.
 I have a sentence—'tis a mock, a jest,
 A ritual of the May.

Take hands, take hands !
 There should be joy in spring—the ice must
 crack.

I loose you from our bond and leave you twain !
 The king, who knowing it,
 Doth company with lovers, is a fool.
 Go, Tristan, go—for of our fellowship
 You are not any more. . . . Your silent mouth
 Moves—let it keep its silence.

Queen Iseult . . .

Queen of the May, turn from me to your lord,
 Turn to Sir Tristan, take his hand ; take hands !

[ISEULT, *with a radiant face, lays her hand in*
 TRISTAN'S : *he bows to the KING and Court,*
and leads her forth as from an altar. Many
incline as they pass and follow them with a
gaze of admiration and pity. Then the pro-
cession enters the Church. MELOT steps out
from among the Lords and lingers behind with
the KING.

MELOT. What have you done—what madness ?

MARK.

Let them go,
 Renounced them to the season. All my cattle
 From all my stables rush now in the meadows ;
 The million trees spring into arborets,

Leaves, flowers of rare and undistinguished
beauty

For the time's purpose. There at least is truth . . .

MELOT. Where will you go ?

[MARK looks out far over the waves.

MARK. The sea roars round Tintagel ;

Where should I go but shipless to the sea ?

MELOT (*pointing to the Chapel*). Why you must
pray ; the little door is open,

The Matins are not sung.

[MARK stares at him bewildered.

All creatures pray,

And bring a change to pass.

MARK. God is not blind :

In me there is no worship.

MELOT. Love is blind.

Love sees things white, white as the driven
snow.

There, pass within !

[The KING, with bowed head, goes into
the Chapel.

SCENE II

Morais. A Forest-glade in May

*To the right an interior of a domed cave, a bed of
rushes on the floor of crystal rock ; a loaf and a
few other things on a shelf of the same rock ;
TRISTAN'S harp and hunting-horn slung on a*

spar. A window is seen in the roof, attainable from without by climbing the sylvan slope of turf. A brazen door, now standing open, gives on broken ground of the forest, that stretches from the cave to a linden-tree in first leaf and a spring with a stream out of it. Grass and flowers everywhere.

TRISTAN *and* ISEULT *come down the rocks of the wild-wood*

TRISTAN. Let me lift thee, all the boulders are not mossed ;

Thy feet are weary. [*She springs into his arms.*

Warm cheeks, where fresh roses
Are being mingled with the loveliest roses !

And yet thy hand is cold as water filling
A silver bowl, how shrewdly to the sense.

Come, let us rest.

[*Sweeping the grass with his hand.*

The dew is almost gone.

[*They seat themselves by the fountain.*

ISEULT.

O Tristan, what a sound

Of peace and ardour ; how the little waters

From the rock-vein are never intermitted

In song from jet to brink. And thou art
here

With me among the lilies, the small lilies,

So unsuspected at the woodland's core,

We breathe them from a whiteness held remote .

By the verdure of their bowers.

TRISTAN. Breathe them lonely,
 Till I have brought out Kurvenal's dry loaf,
 And the dry grapes,
 And fetched a rill for breakfast in my horn.

*[He goes into the cave and brings out what there
 is to eat. He then brings water in his horn
 and they begin their meal.]*

ISEULT. No bread! I'll steep the raisins. Fie,
 you men,

I think you could eat bark like woodpeckers.

[She watches him devour a crust.]

O loved, are we not happy?

TRISTAN. Even as in Paradise.

ISEULT. I would not hear

The name of any other place or give
 A name to this young freshness by the stream.

[On her elbows on the grass.]

O little flowers and meadow-slips and tangle
 Of growing things for June, there is no circlet
 So sweet as one my lover can enwreathe
 Of your young shoots and coral.

See, this clover!

Twist me a wreath and I will shine so fair
 That you will pledge me queen of all the
 forests

Of Cornwall and of Parmenie and Erin,
 Till the last summer tumbles into gold.

I will enchant you.

TRISTAN. What, a clover-wreath!

[He plucks flowers and they weave a chaplet]

together, with which he crowns her. She nestles beside him, her head on his shoulder.

[A far away horn-call.

Listen !

ISEULT (*rising impetuously*). Shut close the door,
And let us to the cavern !

TRISTAN. Stay, this trail

Is right away. No fear, no fear !

ISEULT. But listen !

TRISTAN. No danger, love Iseult. Think you that
Mark

Hunts through the wilderness ?

ISEULT. One joy, one sorrow,
One love, one life between us—and one dread.

TRISTAN. No dread !

ISEULT. O comfortable voice, but I am shaken . . .

[Another blast rings along the distance.

The horn again !

Oh, how I hate the sound !

TRISTAN. And I a hunter !

[A very distant horn is heard.

ISEULT. You will leave me, Tristan ;

You must—ah, might it be here in the woods :

For then I should not light my pyre. So close

I keep me to the rivers and the trees,

Like Byblis, I should drop down in a fountain

When I was weary of pursuing thee ;

Or else like Phyllis . . . often by this linden

I have thought upon her story, how she felt

She was forgotten in the great affairs

That drew Demophoon to Attica,
And breathed her sighs into the leaves so deeply
She found herself amid the waving branches,
And, being rocked of the great winds, had peace.
When you go forth to hunt—you are a hunter,
And you must leave me—leave me in the woods!
TRISTAN (*impatiently*). But this is music; I must
set my harp

To such a song.

ISEULT. You will not greatly suffer;
You have your harp. I see that you are chafing
To track the horn.

[*She walks from him to the cave; at the threshold
she stands and looks back at him, then lies
down on the couch of rushes, with glistening
eyes.*]

TRISTAN (*as he follows her into the cave*). Nay—I
will bar the door,

And we will rest till noon. He does not seek us;
But this for utter safety, if he come.

[*He unsheathes his sword and lays it by her.*]

ISEULT. Tristan, put back your sword. Divide us
not

In soul and body, while your glittering falsehood
Flows by me with base laughter. I revolt.

In Love's name, by his arrows, I conjure
Your flagrant, trothless weapon from my couch.
Quench it—the sinister, cold-flowing steel!

TRISTAN. The sword must stay; it guards you.

I am judge,

In danger, of the means. Forgive, forgive !
And turn to sleep.

ISEULT. How can you so reproach
Your forest-queen ?

TRISTAN. That she should be assoiled
Before the world.

ISEULT. O Tristan !

TRISTAN. Sleep, forget.

ISEULT. We are apart and of your will.

TRISTAN. No woman
Can brook a lover's screen. You fret me. Sleep !
[He goes to the door and pauses.]

How full of song
The forest—an announcing, tell-tale jangle,
And weary to my head. The horn has filled
me

With bent for change, and there is listlessness
In country haunts. But Kurvenal will come
At noontide from Tintagel with his news :
Meantime I must keep guard upon the grotto.
(Turning back.) 'Tis breathing-time with her,
Deep sleep and rest. O perfect loveliness !
The holy clover round her eyes, the weapon
Alert beside her, she enravishes
More that she foils audacity. One kiss
Across the spiteful flash ! O god of Love,
Be worshipped that this check is but a lie.

*[He shuts the door and secures it. There is a
near horn-call ; KING MARK and his MASTER-
HUNTSMAN come through the forest.]*

HUNTSMAN. The doe's-track ceases. Where then is
our quarry ?

MARK. See, in the crystal rock a brazen doorway.

HUNTSMAN. Then this, Sir King, is a love-grot, once
hollowed

By giants of heathen ages in the hillside
For secret dalliance, and then closely sealed
By Christian monarchs as a haunt of devils.

MARK. This door inside and very hard is fastened.

HUNTSMAN. A marvel ! Such-like caverns in a
mountain

Are lighted, so my father's father told him,
With windows through the rock's acclivity.

Shall I make search over and round the ridges ?

MARK. Thou shalt. [*The HUNTSMAN climbs.*]

This weary hunting that brings freshness
To head and cheek, but to the heart no service !

HUNTSMAN. Here is the casement, clear of roots and
staring.

MARK. What see you ?

HUNTSMAN. Christ, 'tis magic ! Is she mortal ?

MARK. A living soul within ?

HUNTSMAN. A man and woman

Each side a sword that twinkles glassily.

The man is even as other men, the woman . . .

But I will look no further.

MARK. How you tremble !

HUNTSMAN (*springing down*). Look not, my king,
come with me from the cavern.

MARK (*climbing*). Is this the zigzag that you took ?

HUNTSMAN.

God help you !

MARK (*looking in*). Even so. Good huntsman, lead
my hounds to kennel ;

I hunt no more this forest. All go home.

[*Exit* HUNTSMAN.

My heart is cold with joy—the naked sword,
They in their beauty and seclusion : round them
Noon's fervid hour ; both guileless, innocent.
O Easter-day, how can my heart arise
To greet a joy like this !

Iseult !

Thy face

Hot, flushed with childish vermeil, underneath
The purple chaplet of the clover-flower ;
Thy sunlit mouth, so lovable, my kisses
Would rain down in a galaxy of flames,
As though this sun had sped them ! Stay, a
shaft

Falls harmfully ; it will awaken her.

Ah, Tristan, I can shield her slumber too :

Thou with thy good drawn blade, I with this
rumple

Of leaves and grass and flowers in mat and
lattice

Across the flood of day. God keep thee secret !

[*After covering the window, he descends
and goes out.*

ISEULT (*within*). Tristan ! wake ! Tristan ! wake !

We have been spied and from the casement
yonder,

For it is closed with grasses, lily-leaves,
And bluebells. Tristan !

TRISTAN (*within*).

I will look around.

[*He unbars and opens the door.*]

Oh, here are steps !

We are discovered.

We must fly—but where ?

How get thee to a vessel ? All the coast
His spies will guard against us. O sweet days,
For ever shaken from us ! Yet if Mark
Spied on us, heaven be praised the sword was
there.

ISEULT. Would he had seen the truth and drew us
now

From lambent Maytime to the lighted stake—
An indivisible close ! Where is your pulse ?
I would be firewood to a blaze that quenched
My ashes with thy ashes.

Enter KURVENAL

TRISTAN.

Kurvenal,

Our refuge is discovered.

KURVENAL.

By the King.

He met me on the forest-edge and bade me
Seek you with prayer you would return to him,
You and his Queen, unhazarded in honour,
Pardoning and faultless. He recalls his wife
And you the prince and heir of Cornwall,
pledging

To you his kingdom's welcome, and oblivion
 Of all past mischief in the people's tongue.
 'Tis generous homage from a King, my lord ;
 See thou demean thee in observance worthy
 Of such a reconciliation.

*[He is going into the cave with a loaf
 when ISEULT calls him back.]*

ISEULT. Kurvenal,
 Carry his harp away, he is impatient,
 And it is time to part. My holy crown
 Shall drench its triplet leaves in the blessed
 fountain
 Still voluble of us, that gives my queenship
 The lightning of a smile.

[She throws her clover-crown into the water.]

Farewell, Farewell !

O sun and valleys, he knows not where he goes !

SCENE III

Tintagel. The KING'S Hall ; gloaming

*A harp is heard ; gradually by the uncertain light
 the faces are discerned*

*A crowd gathers at the open doorway as
 TRISTAN sings*

TRISTAN. Helen of Troy, Helen of Troy !
 And the dead men on the plain ;

They wrap them in their winding sheets,
They cover up the slain ;
But none may bury the lovely face
That hath wrought men all their pain—
Helen of Troy, Helen of Troy,
We would look on you again !

MARK. To have you and once more to have your
harp,

Tristan, beloved !

TRISTAN. Once more to have my harp.

MARK. You set my heart a-bleeding with your
music.

It is my penitence.

TRISTAN. No, no, it is the music . . .

I listen to it deeper than you all :

It is the silence that it leaves behind.

[ISEULT *steals in at the back of the hall,*
deeply hooded.

(*Very softly.*)

Helen of Troy, Helen of Troy,

We would look on you again !

ISEULT (*low to MELOT*). I stole up from my sick-bed
to this music ;

But music is the enemy of love,

And tears it from its bonds.

MELOT (*restraining her*).

Atune, atune !

[*She vanishes.*

SCENE IV

The orchard at Tintagel—as in Act II., Scene V

A burning noon at midsummer

The QUEEN'S chamber in the background, reached by shallow steps. MELOT is talking to himself among the old apple-trees hung with mistletoe.

MELOT. The world must not be governed by Beauty, and the world must not be governed by Love. O ancient Druids, if yours were the secret! Guardians of the Universe, shedders of blood, requiring the renunciation of all things that the heart may a little feel the dew! But what is this? A procession from the Queen's chamber!

[MELOT draws back among the sweeping boughs of the apple-trees as the QUEEN'S maidens come down the orchard with white and purple cushions which they spread on the grass. Then they sit down on the edge of the cushions and weave daisies.]

NESSA. Joceline, are you weeping? Will she die?

JOCELINE. It thrills me through to touch her, like a harp.

NESSA. She will not die . . .

(Picking a daisy.) She loves him, loves him not,
Loves him. . . . Come closer, Joceline! She
loves
Lord Tristan.

JOCELINDE (*rising and settling the cushions*). This is all she bade us do.

[ISEULT *is borne in a litter down the orchard. She is dressed completely in cloth of gold. BRANGAENA is beside her.*

ISEULT (*to BRANGAENA*). So hot a noon !

(*To the Maidens.*) Remember that you say I am asleep.

And trouble not to seek me till the eve,
For I would lie a long while in the sun.

[*The Maidens pass down the orchard, up the steps into the QUEEN'S chamber. ISEULT pushes a low bough aside and looks up.*

The sky is very hot . . . and now—fetch Tristan !
Fetch me the crystal cup
You plunged into the sea, give me the flagon,
The dim strong-scented wine that rose like music,
That sank down in my heart to swell again !
I cannot bear this consciousness : my senses
Are idle as the war-horse on the plain,
That hears the battle-neigh, that has no rider,
That champs and cannot graze. Fetch Tristan
to me.

[MELOT *advances and stands before the litter, the postern-gate behind him.*

[*Startled and as if in defence.*

Melot, how often you have led Sir Tristan
Here to this orchard, and in Love's own name.

MELOT. How often ! And to-day he must not come.

ISEULT. Then I must die !

MELOT (*eagerly*). It is a magic power.

ISEULT. Melot, you do not kill yourself ; a dwarf
You are and loved of none, and yet you live.
What do you live for ?

MELOT. For the seasons, child.
To see the snow again—it is enough.
My eyes have gathered simples from their sight,
And I have looked so far I do not weep.
Iseult's Iseult,
Is there no magic in you, and no power
For the scents upon the air ? . . .

Death is the charm :
It is what you have drunk : your Fate persists,
And she is standing by an open grave.
ISEULT. I cannot ! Melot, you as well might ask
The apple-trees, when every branch is crimson,
Of their own will to crackle in the fire.
I cannot die—not for a hundred years.
Since I have drunk the cup
There can be no more dying any more.

MELOT. You tempt your lover to his death.

ISEULT. Temptation !
You say I tempt . . .

[*With free laughter in response to MELOT's
face.*

There is no Paradise
To woman, till her Paradise is lost.
It is so sweet to fall into temptation,
And to draw down, to lead

Down to the edges of the precipice.

You see—it is the Charm!

. . . You love the King :

You will betray us ?

MELOT. Were that for his peace?

You think Love has one season and one office !

ISEULT. But one ; we do not weary of our food ;

We should renounce our breath, renouncing it.

Melot, I am not steady for discourse ;

I am estranged from you—the great estrangement
Betwixt the living and the dead.

(To BRANGAENA.) Fetch Tristan !

(*More bitterly to MELOT.*) You love the King and
you would see me dead.

MELOT. Ay, if you cannot change ;

For we must die, or ripen, or be loathed.

[BRANGAENA *unperceived slips through the postern.*

The Charm is out.

And you can raise no further incantation.

ISEULT (*rousing herself*). The Charm is out!
Brangaena!

MELOT. She is sped.

[He turns down the orchard and passes through the open door of the QUEEN'S chamber.

ISEULT. He leaves me, and he is my Genius.

I have no power to call . . . But I am glad !

[Again lying back and looking up to the sky.

O ecstasy—the serpent in the grass,

And the stillness of the dazzle !

Tristan, Tristan !

With every hour his lustrousness falls off.

. . . O little verdant paths, my feet are aching ;
I walk on burning ploughshares, day and night,
But none are curious ; I may suffer now . . .

My lover is grown kind—

As one should speak of age in youth ; this
kindness

Is contract between mortals . . .

He delays ;

I tremble, and a music rushes through me

That cannot find its way. O my Desire !

TRISTAN *enters : for a moment he does not
perceive the QUEEN*

And now I see him with no other eyes

At rest on him—O God !

[*As TRISTAN approaches.*

You stayed too long ;

I have grown cold, and I am sick.

TRISTAN.

Beloved,

But I am all your sickness.

ISEULT.

All.

TRISTAN.

What is it

That flushes you so darkly ?

[*He kisses her hand.*

ISEULT.

Nay, no more,

No more joy of you ! 'Tis the crystal cup

That binds us—we are utter weariness
And dolour to each other ; our desire
Burns, as the spices that embalm Love's corse,
And leaps and sparkles as Love's very brand.
O Love, O Charm ! The Charm is broken up ;
The crystal flagon has sailed far to sea ;
The sea-wrack has set root in it ; it sails
A hairy skull across the universe.
Now. . . . You would pledge me, and there is
no wine,
Only great recollections and the hour.
O misery, what are you ?

TRISTAN. I am Tristan.
Wherein have I offended, that you keep
So sealed from me ? It is like banishment.
Wherefore ?

ISEULT. So Melot asks, so asks Brangaena,
So Love would never ask. Lie back a little,
Your arm across my pillow ! Ah, as sweet
To me as hydromel and bergamot. . . .
Now swear me all your curse.

TRISTAN. Heart's Sorrow, hush !
God shield us, there are voices
Within your chamber.

[ISEULT *more closely clasps him.*

There is struggle even . . .

[*Seeking to free himself.*

Sweet, for your sake . . .

[*His eyes remain fascinated on the open doorway
of ISEULT'S chamber. There is the sound of*

a scuffle. Presently the KING stands on the threshold : he meets TRISTAN'S gaze, and silently withdraws, closing the door.

Iseult, love, you behold not !

ISEULT. How should I ?

Still so fearful of the flame ?

Tristan, it does not scorch ; it hurts no more
Than yonder blazing noon.

Feel my soft hand ;

Put by all terror ; wait as in a trance.

Are you my lover, Tristan ? I put on

For you my wedding-raiment, this gold raiment—
Nothing I wear has ever been King Mark's.

Look, look !

[She passes her hand through her hair.

How the gold matches with the gold . . .

No grey : I never will bear age for you.

Am I not blonde ?

TRISTAN (*starting*). There is a flow of blood
Down from your chamber-door. Yet all is silent.
Love, it is trickling down to us.

ISEULT. What matter !

Sweep back my hair. Conceive

The glory wouldst thou lay me on the pyre,

Carry and lay me there : I would enfold thee

In my swift arms of flame.

TRISTAN (*still gazing toward the place where MARK stood*). You shall not die,

God's peace, you shall not. We must bid farewell,
For ever we must bid farewell.

ISEULT.

For ever ?

Then to the waste again, then to the storms !
And paths that are but foot-prints in the sand,
One's own fresh foot-prints. I shall let you go ;
I shall walk on alone !

But take this ring,

A pledge, a jewel, an eternal kiss . . .

For I shall ever dwell within thy heart,

As Christ's own wounds dwell with Him ever-
more,

In Heaven with God, or wandering 'mid the
damned !

[Pressing her face down on his arm.

Remember—

I shall awake . . . remember, let it haunt you
How I awake, how I breathe through the noon,
The sunset, and the long close of the night.

TRISTAN.

Thy wedding-dress,

Thou art in thy wedding-dress . . .

[Kissing the ring.

Our love henceforth

Be vain and be for ever. Cloth of gold . . .

ISEULT. The Charm is broke !

TRISTAN.

The Charm is just begun.

Pure cloth of gold . . .

*[He stands apart from her for an instant with
wide, blank stare, then, sharply turning, goes
out by the postern.*

ISEULT (*deeply sighing*). Then I will bend myself

To his pleasure and be lissome—play the harlot

Here, in the orchard.

I will veil myself,

I must, I am not dim.

[She stretches herself, veiled, as if recovering from sleep, as KING MARK, COURTIER, the BISHOP of THAMES and PRIESTS enter and draw back.]

ALL.

Alone !

The Queen alone !

[The KING comes forward, his arms wide to ISEULT. Then suddenly he turns to his Court.]

MARK.

Truth, truth ! And I surprised

A noontide sleep in the orchard. Go your ways,
Speed on, return to villages and streets.

If you encounter

A troop of lepers on your way, with haste
Bid them come tinkling hither. I have one
To join to their abhorred company.

[The COURTIER, BISHOP, and PRIESTS retire.]

Iseult,

What would you ? You are damned so very
deep

I would but pamper you as all the fiends
Are pampering. You keep a royal state—
Would you still keep it ?

Would you be my Queen ?

You smile : none other

Can fetch that smile, and I have rarer jewels ;
My sceptre—you shall wield it—anything
That I can give you, ask ! . . . for I would sell

My soul to please you.

 Could I join your tribe,
And catch you underneath this burning heaven !
I am devoted to you now, Iseult ;
It is a magic hour.

ISEULT.

Sire, I would live.

 . . . Let me live on
To sunset, and the long close of the night.

ACT V

SCENE I

By a burial-mound in Parmenie

TRISTAN *and the* SONS *of* RUAL

A SON OF RUAL. Lord Tristan, it is yonder. There they lie,

Thy foster-father and thy foster-mother ;
One for ten years alone, before he bedded
His dust in peace with hers he so had loved
That every night he prayed to lay him down
By her spent earth.

TRISTAN. She was a silent-light,
Gay in the shadow, that we men discovered
As strangely to our need.

A SON OF RUAL. Dear liege, you loved her :
And as she died and lay in amplitude
Of passing with all unction to her God,
Her eyes went round our group dissatisfied,
And a babe's voice cried at her husky lips
For Tristan.

TRISTAN. God allow she sees me weeping
Beside this solemn grass ! The good are mighty ;

They are the power of God within the world.
 I kiss this mound . . . the ash-leaves drifting
 over

Fall rightlier than my kisses. Foster-brothers,
 By Rual's grave I could cry out for bread,
 I stand so beggared in my emptiness
 Beside the rich, informing solitude
 Where saints are buried.

Let us go ! . . . Yet linger
 One moment while the arc of sunset sinks
 Down the great arc of the turfed sepulchre.
 It is my chastisement to feel the blessing,
 I cannot take, relentless in its passion
 To find me what I was when young and loyal
 I left the land.

[*A cry from the SONS of RUAL.*

SONS OF RUAL. Remain !

Father and mother, we have laid to rest,
 But God hath sent thee back, and with one
 voice,
 One heart, we pray thee bide in thy own
 land,
 With thy own men.

TRISTAN. Forgive ! I still must wander ;
 My feet must hasten from this grassy turf
 And little crackling grass-shells that I crush.
 I cannot stay . . .

Forgive me !

A SON OF RUAL. Wherefore seek
 Continual, sad adventure ?

Enter KAHEDIN

TRISTAN.

Who is this ?

He has an English face, a cheerful health
Of beauty, the brave lad ! . . . Much of my
build

Before I reached Tintagel.

A SON OF RUAL.

Kindly greeting !

KAHEDIN. Is not that man, long-limbed and tall
and wasted,

The great Sir Tristan ?

A SON OF RUAL.

Our liege lord, Sir Tristan.

KAHEDIN. May I have speech with him ?

TRISTAN.

He listens, boy.

As to himself, for he was scarce your age
When last he stood where you are standing
now,

Your great lord Tristan.

KAHEDIN.

I am Kahedin,

The only son of the Duke Jovelin
Of Arundel, that lies on English sea-coast
With southern crouch. My father's enemies
Have power beyond his compass of defence :
His land is waste, his villages in ruin,
Or smoking from their wild-fires to the wind ;
His thralls and beasts are driven in multitude
To alien fields. And I am come to pray thee,
The mightiest lord of war in all the islands,
To aid my father.

TRISTAN.

I will aid him, boy.

KAHEDIN. I am a Knight.

TRISTAN. Sir Kahedin, your hand.

Will you be mine in friendship ?

KAHEDIN. To my death.

TRISTAN (*turning to the SONS OF RUAL*). I need your
aid—five hundred men at least

With store of food and forage. Muster swiftly—

We ride to-night.

KAHEDIN. O miracle ! My father

Will welcome us in five short days ; Iseult

My sister come to meet you.

TRISTAN. Has the duke

Your father but one daughter ? And her
name ?

You said her name . . .

KAHEDIN. Iseult.

TRISTAN. And is she fair,

Iseult, your sister ?

KAHEDIN. Yea, my lord, a maiden

Of beauty very still, as for itself.

She has white hands. Iseult of the White
Hands

We call her for their loveliness of white.

TRISTAN. A winning grace, white hands ! Come,
you and I

Banquet together, ere they harness us.

(*Turning back.*) Farewell, dear grave. We leave
thee in thy dusk :

The stars will come—the evening star is come,
Farewell !

SCENE II

Arundel: a corridor of the Castle; through the columns the great Hall is seen lit and full of guests, breaking from a dance. Couples pass out of the Hall down the corridor. It is near midnight.

DUKE JOVELIN *is talking to an old friend
and guest under a column*

JOVELIN. Sir, I have a son, a son that is no longer his own master. Kahedin has chosen him a lord; my daughter has chosen her a lord: they have chosen the same lord. But what matter! This Sir Tristan is an enchanter.

THE GUEST. That is what I fear—if there should be infatuation, and our land ruined.

JOVELIN. Tut, tut! The land is not ruined that is infatuated, the land is not in ruin that welcomes happiness. We are a small people: a very great warrior is come among us. There is no such Roman Knight alive; he carries the banner of the Empire to its triumph—he is come to rule, and he shall rule us all. I am devoted to him as his faithful servant, Kurvenal.

THE GUEST. My lord, would you have us transfer our allegiance to Sir Tristan ?

JOVELIN. Ay, now that Sir Tristan is my son.

It is a happy marriage, a blest marriage—the Smile of Heaven is upon it. Look there—

[He points through the moonlit corridor.]

Look where our beeches slope across the land,
How pleasantly . . . Sir Tristan has established
Our Dukedom in such settlement, the bird
Broods o'er her nest, her patience unannulled ;
The seasons have their flow and reckless summer
Dare gambol for a while. A happy marriage !

[He turns from the moonlight to the lamp-lit guest-room.]

Now we shall all breathe free, and my old age
drop down in dreams to God.

[TRISTAN and ISEULT of ARUNDEL cross the Hall, hand in hand.]

My dove is a rare dove . . . I drew them
together ; the harp did much, but her father
more : I drew them together with the warm
guile of age.

[KAHEDIN and a lady pass out : they are followed by other couples seeking the fresh night. The old GUEST is greeted and joins the procession.]

So—they pass !

[A band of youths enters from the other end of the corridor.]

But we must still give welcome ; we must stand
at the portal and give welcome to the young.

Our welcome, welcome !

[The wedding-guests, saluting him, pass into the Hall. TRISTAN and ISEULT of ARUNDEL come out together.]

O comfortable Vision !

[He passes them with a smile and a gesture of blessing, then goes within.]

TRISTAN. My little princess of the darting eyes,
So tender,

And small and dark, thine eyes are mine far closer
Than any jewel that I wear—their tears,
And their wet shining when I play the harp.

ISEULT OF ARUNDEL. Tristan, your harp—it is the
dearest thing

To me in all the world.

TRISTAN. You love my harp ?

ISEULT OF ARUNDEL. It is my glory . . . Burthen
of Iseult !

I have no music—

But I have wooed you to the brink of death
With sighs, with open, long-drawn sighs, with
service

Too eager for the bidding of your thoughts.

I need no longer strive. *En vous ma vie.*

TRISTAN (*caressing her*). Mad, little echo, but you
must not take

Such wild reverberation from the hills,
Of life or death : the bleating flocks, the call
And invocations of the shepherd-folk
Alone should stir these lips.

ISEULT OF ARUNDEL. ' O Love, Iseult '

I echo what you breathe me, you sweet Angel !

TRISTAN. Beloved,

How sweet thou art !

ISEULT OF ARUNDEL. I love thee.

TRISTAN. Ah, I wonder !

It is a wish I found among my thoughts.

ISEULT OF ARUNDEL. I loved thee all the while.

TRISTAN. There is no hatred

In thy soft face, nor any pride with hate.

Thou must not change, Iseult.

ISEULT OF ARUNDEL. Tristan, ' Iseult '

Is music on thy lips and to my ears

Excelling music. Perilous, sweet eyes . . .

How I have watched them in their wanderings

More than thou ever canst have knowledge of.

Look down, look down upon me.

TRISTAN. Ah, most sweet.

Soon they will come to lead thee to thy bridal,

To pluck thee from me—and then give thee
back

My own for ever.

*[As he withdraws his arm, caressing her, a
ring drops from his finger on the floor.]*

ISEULT OF ARUNDEL. Tristan, give it me !

I covet it ; thou hast no other gem.

Tristan, a bridal gift.

Not on thy hand ;

There it displeases me.

TRISTAN. O Gentleness,

But thou art mine, and all my will to rule—

[Struggling to speak.

... Sweet wife,

If I may trust thee—

I must wear this ring

Through the ages, in my tomb.

ISEULT.

Is it a vow?

TRISTAN (*staring at it, as he slowly turns it round his finger*). I had forgotten it . . . Now like a ghost

It haunts me with remembrance of a vow.

[*The Matrons are seen gathering in the midst of the Hall, and receiving each a torch.*]

Thy Women

Come for thee . . .

[*Kneeling to her.*

Fairest, but the vow forbids

Our marriage-rites until a year be passed.

I give this secret to thee as the jewel

Of my own soul : I have no other gift.

[ISEULT of ARUNDEL swoons. TRISTAN supports her, and then lays her in the arms of the women, who have advanced with their torches.

Bear her away. Oh, comfort her !

[*She is carried out by the Matrons.*]

Beside him,

She sits beside him ; we are coupled now,

Chained, coupled each of us! I have been
free,

Free to forget her, free ! Iseult, Iseult !

Would I were in the tomb.

KAHEDIN (*returning*). A longing bridegroom.

Come, cheer ! The revels fail.

TRISTAN. I am struck to death.

JOVELIN (*approaching*). They say the bride has swooned—

Nay, nay—her father
Is not too anxious.

I have set a measure
To check the laugh.

TRISTAN. A measure—I will lead.

[*Exeunt into the Hall, as the minstrels
strike up the measure of a dance.*]

SCENE III

*A wild slope covered with brambles, under the
walls of Arundel Castle*

TRISTAN and KAHEDIN are walking together :
*suddenly TRISTAN sits down on the root of a
beech-tree.*

TRISTAN. You strive,
And follow me about, and cannot open
This secret that is guilt : I know your trouble :
She that you love is wedded.

KAHEDIN. She is mine,
As your Iseult is yours.

TRISTAN. Yea, for all ages
Iseult is Tristan's. . . . I will keep you guarded
To night with naked sword.

KAHEDIN. How prompt you are,
 How merciful. . . . But, Tristan, think—the
 peril ! [Looking at him uneasily.
 You are not going to your doom ?

TRISTAN. . . . So surely
 Love crumbles all things, it must come to
 pass.

KAHEDIN. You know this love ? What must be
 told of it ?

TRISTAN (*looking out over the country*). That it must
 come to pass,
 And that it crumbles all things, even itself,
 Even its own desires.

KAHEDIN. Tristan, my brother !

TRISTAN (*rising quickly*). For this adventure.
 [KAHEDIN perceives his sister straying
 among the clumps of covert.

KAHEDIN. I have told her all.
 [He goes out as TRISTAN advances towards
 ISEULT of ARUNDEL.

TRISTAN. What are you doing ?

ISEULT OF ARUNDEL. Gathering blackberries.

TRISTAN. You shall not. They will stain your
 hands—white hands,
 These whitest hands.

[He takes her hands, kisses and fondles
 them. She stops picking the berries.

ISEULT OF ARUNDEL. My lord, your will to me
 Is sweeter than the taste of any fruit,
 And it is all I have—your will, your pleasure.

TRISTAN. Pleasure of mine !

ISEULT OF ARUNDEL. Were there compassion in
you,

If you could feel——

TRISTAN. What can I do for you,

Nor break my vow ?

ISEULT OF ARUNDEL. Sing to me, as you sang, sing
of Iseult.

[TRISTAN *moves away, she follows.*

For if I may not pluck the fruit,
And may not catch your music for my harp,
Nor open up my grief . . . a little help me !
Help me a little ! Twenty times a day
You would pick up my missal, bind me flowers,
Put by a tress of my hair. Is that for-
bidden ?

Then, on my knees, I supplicate, companion
My hours with something of your thought.

TRISTAN. I journey . . .

And, listen, I adventure life and limb
To night that Kahedin, our best beloved,
Should rescue or embrace
The lady who so long has wasted for him,
Who now is wasting. Pray for Kahedin.

ISEULT OF ARUNDEL (*with anger*). For you !

TRISTAN. No, I am damned. Open your thoughts
To Kahedin. . . .

Take as your sister, if she needs a refuge,
The lady that he loves. Open your thoughts.

[*Looking back at her defiantly.*

Can you not pray—not with these cursed, white hands ?

ISEULT OF ARUNDEL. My hands—I plunge them in the blackberries :

I will not stain them with a harlot's touch.

TRISTAN (*more defiantly—singing*).

La dame chante doucement,

La voix s'accorde à l'instrument,

Les mains sont belles . . .

Is that the song, Iseult ?

[*Exit.*

SCENE IV

*Arundel Castle. A passage by the door into
TRISTAN'S chamber*

ISEULT of ARUNDEL, *with a small dog, leans
against the partition*

KURVENAL *enters*

ISEULT OF ARUNDEL.

No, Kurvenal !

KURVENAL. But I am older than your tart refusals ;

And my dear Master

So strangely sick, I will have access to him . . .

Wounded and venomd—sick to death ! This stillness

Has nothing of the heaving up and down
In the air where there is breathing.

ISEULT OF ARUNDEL (*listening*). There is breath ;

Have patience, Kurvenal. My brother watches.

KURVENAL. The lad he calls his brother ! He
forgets

To call me servant, and I am his servant ;

But poets never keep the truth of names.

If you knew all !

[*He moves away : she listens more intently.*]

ISEULT OF ARUNDEL. Tristan is speaking loud.

I have missed something, but . . .

Hush, Petit Cru ! . . .

He speaks so loud and clear, I shall know all.

[*She lays her head against the door for a
long while.*]

The voices now are still, and Petit Cru

Is quiet at my feet. I cannot stir,

I cannot move . . .

I am as a dead bird that rocks and swings,

Nailed to its gibbet.

It were good to pass

Within the chamber . . . [*She shakes her head.*]

Petit Cru, the door

Will open, and thy master call for thee.

I will not suffer it : though he may call,

Thou shalt not be caressed of him again.

I am quite alone. All love him—

Kahedin—

I am a little thing to stand alone !

SCENE V

A chamber at Tintagel. It is grown dark

Gradually ISEULT is seen seated on one of two thrones upon a dais. She is looking out to sea. Sudden gleams from the low sunset strike in.

KING MARK *enters and sits beside her*

MARK. You keep your state,
Queen, to a wailing wind.

ISEULT. I had not missed you.
I keep my place perpetual by your throne
Enthroned. It is your pleasure.

MARK. You look out ?

ISEULT. Is that forbidden ? If there be a sail
This winter time the sea-gull stretches it.

MARK. Iseult !

ISEULT. I know
There is a feast to-night.

MARK. The gallery
Will crowd with minstrels.

ISEULT. I would hear no music—
No harping more ! . . .

The small brown-feathered birds,
Flecked, of flecked song—the siskin and the
merle,

The intimate warm creatures of the wood
That peck at blossoms ! . . . Hide your face
from me !

MARK. Why do you love the forest ? Is it sweet—
 Give me your hands and press mine as you speak—
 Is it that there your heart was innocent ?
 You grip my hands. Ah, then I can forgive.

ISEULT. I never can forgive.

MARK (*with sudden passion*). Then hear my news—
 Tristan is married. Do you smile, Iseult ?
 So those a battle smites will blanch and smile.
 Tristan is married and at Arundel
 Lives with his wife, Iseult of the White Hands—
 Why do you lay yours forth upon your robe ?—
 In love and honour, for men say this woman
 Is chaste and of great faithfulness.

ISEULT. Say more,
 Tell all . . . not with your comment, with
 detail . . .
 What feast was made for Tristan, what the
 wine,
 And who was drunken ; with what wreath of
 myrtle
 Or flower or fruit his bride enlaced her hair ;
 What largesse was outpoured and how he kissed
 her
 Before the people ? You shall have my pardon
 If you will give me regal entertainment,
 And sting my interest in the tale you tell.
 I have lived far from ballads, quite shut off
 From any minstrel. I should love a story
 Of Tristan and Iseult.

My hands are fresh,

And shine across the blood in them as shells.

More of the story ! *[Falling back.*

But it has no power ;

Not in the rumour,

Not in the vision, for you cannot frame it

To haunt me even : it but flits along,

A thin and wasted fancy on your voice.

Ha, ha ! You would provoke a little mirth,

A little laughter from me. Mark, remember,

While I am laughing, how as Tristan is

So is Iseult of Ireland, so King Mark—

Married as Tristan. We are married, Mark.

*[He supports her head. After closing her
eyes for a while, she uncloses them.*

A dream ! A dream !

Why should you tell me of your dreams ? So

Tristan

Has won a wife ? Have you no other dream ?

MARK. Yea, verily I have another dream.

Tristan is married : you are desolate.

But I have loved you night and day and night

Again. Now you are fallen, still I love you,

I see you fair. Beloved,

If I might suck you up, even as the sea

Sucks up some crazy little bark that tears

Against its waves, to haven it below

In its unfathomed waters !

*[ISEULT slowly rises and disengages her-
self from MARK.*

ISEULT.

Peace ! No more !

Let all the dreams be mine ! Away !—No more !

[*He leaves her with a heavy sigh.*

That I might drink of death ! Death has the
secrets

That grow from the roots of sleep :

Would I might drink

Before the wedded woman, drink, and dash

The goblet at her feet. Iseult !—He dare not

Mellow the tempest of that name, with magic

Of his low voice, to her. Iseult ! Iseult !

[*Perceiving BRANGAENA at the doorway.*

Ho, I am calling to myself, Brangaena ;

My name is like some awful monument,

Some temple on the sands I cannot pass,

And yet it is no use to me. I can

But pray that it will crush me with its stones.

Iseult !

[*She laughs again.*

I often heard my mother tell

Of the immense, wide Afric gods, and wondered

If they had wrought the worlds . . .

But I forget !

Tristan is married.

BRANGAENA.

Yea.

ISEULT.

Then Mark has blabbed ?

BRANGAENA (*shaking her head*). I heard it on the
shore.

ISEULT.

News, news ! A vessel

Over the waves under the walls ? Brangaena,

Is Tristan married ?

BRANGAENA.

There are merchant-men

Hid in the shingle-cave. They offer silks . . .

If presently

They may bring in their wares !

[ISEULT *motions they may enter.*

It is a vessel—

Think but of that. If I have any craft

In secret it shall speed you to Sir Tristan.

O child, the sailing ! You shall see his face.

[*Exit.*

ISEULT. It is a dream. I take it up again

With slumbering senses. Tristan—does he come ?

Is he a merchant-man ? Disguise, disguise !

Tristan once more. O Love, but straight and
clear

Let him come to me—Tristan !

*Re-enter BRANGAENA with KAHEDIN and others
disguised as merchant-men*

These are strangers.

Unroll your silks. It is an empty hour.

Unroll, display your trafficking.

[*Sheets of silk, tinted in beautiful colours, are
opened by two merchant-men and laid before her.*

KAHEDIN *lifts up a goblet and shows TRISTAN'S
ring on his hand.*

KAHEDIN.

Of Tours !

ISEULT (*seizing his wrist*). You have a message.

KAHEDIN (*terror-struck*). Noble Queen, believe

We come here very humble, in distress,

With silks, with treasure, and with many riches.

ISEULT. You come here with my ring. Then he is
dead,

Tristan is dead ?

It is a goodly cup

You lifted in that glittering hand—of Tours,
You said, a cup of Tours. Is this the message ?

And did he drink of it, your lord, Sir Tristan ?

Has he bequeathed it to me ? For I know,

I have known all the day that he is dead.

KAHEDIN. Dying, great Queen, and dying for your
love.

ISEULT. O merchant-man, you have a vulgar tongue !

Be dumb at least, give no interpretation.

If you are charged to yield the jewel up,

Lay it aside . . . and put with it the goblet,

These Spanish things, the silk. I will weigh down

Your vessel with their price : it is my message.

Brangaena, give him gold . . .

And for this wine

To crown the cup with.

KAHEDIN. Lady you mistake.

I am no merchant ; I am Kahedin,

And brother to Sir Tristan.

ISEULT. You would say

That you are brother to Sir Tristan's wife,

Iseult of the White Hands ?

KAHEDIN. I had forgotten

Sir Tristan has a wife, or I a sister

That may be called Iseult. You have the name,

You breathe it. O fair bloneness of the land,

My lord Sir Tristan is laid nigh to death :
 But have compassion of his singing eyes,
 That sing for you across the western sea.

ISEULT. What help is in the sea—so alien
 It is, so bitter and so girding cold ?
 Has he forgotten——

KAHEDIN. All that is not you.
 Rejecting tendance, as the tide flows in,
 Borne on a litter to the beach, he waits
 For hours and counts the waves as they were hours,
 And sees them ebb away, nor will he miss
 In any wind the rushing of these waves
 That rush from Cornwall.

ISEULT. Wherefore should he die ?

KAHEDIN. Lady, this is my grief. He perilled life
 Guarding a tower wherein I met my love :
 Her husband slew him with a poisoned arrow . . .
 Except you heal him he will surely die.

ISEULT. Is this the message ?

KAHEDIN. Of the golden hours
 He bade me to remind you, of your love,
 Of his first sickness, of your mother's love,
 And of a magic draught upon the sea :
 Also he bade me to salute this maiden,
 If she is named Brangaena.

ISEULT. All the magic,
 All, all the spoiling of the magic rests
 With this Brangaena.

Take the maid with you ;
 She knows my mother's simples, is a nurse,

And will recover you your lord.

O Boy,

Why do you stand there trembling at my feet ?

KAHEDIN. He said

Nothing that I have said—that was in sleep
Or wandering fever, with his eyes bent on me
Fading and darkening slowly as they faded :
That was in weakness——

*[He goes to the table, takes the ring,
kisses it, and repeats.]*

‘ Greet her : all the greetings

I have I send to her. I keep back nothing
Of comfort to myself.’

ISEULT (*settling the ring on her finger*). Brangaena, take
The brightest of the silks,
That one, the vermeil-gold.

This is your sail,
Sir Kahedin. We will unclosethese eyes
Of your sheathed falcon—gallantly will steer
Into your port. Your ship shall burn like fire,
Like sunrise on the waves.

KAHEDIN. My lord will live.

ISEULT. For I shall bear to him such joy, such
tidings ;

For we will take this cup,
And all the vintage back. The wine is strong
For dying lips—no matter !

*[She laughs as she unrolls and lifts in her arms a
sheet of the red-gold silk].*

Hoist the sail !

SCENE VI

Arundel: a terrace rimming the sea with its parapet, closed at one side by a round tower, at the other by a bold cliff, jutting out into the sea. ISEULT of ARUNDEL stands on the top of the cliff at watch.

ISEULT OF ARUNDEL. How I am weary, watching
through the night—

A sentinel, lone sea-bird !—for a sail
Watching, and for the colour of a sail.

Oh, in the dark

There comes a little respite from my cares,
My sight being covered, and the sounds I hear
So gentle and of motion

Like a caress, and like the passing-over
Of a loved hand even as one falls asleep !

But now it is the dawn, the stars such lamps
They look as they would fall into the sea :
And the great night-clouds pile.

KURVENAL *enters*

KURVENAL Lady, Sir Tristan
Asks record of the night ?

ISEULT OF ARUNDEL. How fares Sir Tristan ?
Has there been sleep ?

KURVENAL. The change as when a diver
Is lost and reappears. Once in the night

I prayed that I might call you to his bedside.

He shook his head and answered, 'She will come.'

ISEULT OF ARUNDEL (*seizing his arm*). More record !
Speak !

KURVENAL. I said, 'The dawn breaks cold ; for pity's
sake

Let me draw in our Lady from her watch :
She will be chilled to death.'

'Is it so cold at sea ?'

He answered. 'Does the cold make it so long ?'

Then heavily his head fell on my neck ;

Nor could I break from him.

ISEULT OF ARUNDEL. Say that the night
Was cold, as I have seldom known the stars
Blazon its cold : say that the night was long ;
And even now it moves

As it were scarce worth while to move aside,
So soon it will have business with the clouds,
And pressure of a day that cannot break.

KURVENAL (*looking round to a clear point of light
in the East*). The words . . . your words !

ISEULT OF ARUNDEL. Say all
The words I give you as you say his words.

The rest be secret from you ! [*Exit KURVENAL.*

[*Gradually an even daylight prevails, and a
fleet of boats turns the point of the cliff.*

Lo !—

They are come home, the small brown fisher-
boats

From the night's toil ! The wives

Of these poor fishers have had quiet rest ;
 And now they stir themselves within their houses,
 And stir the children. . . . Presently the lads
 Will crawl down to the beach and help the fishers
 Pull up the boat . . . the wife will shade her
 eyes,

And give her husband welcome at the door.

My record—when again

Kurvenal comes to seek me—my true word :

‘ There is no sail ’ . . . only this little flock

Of the brown fisher-boats returning home.

(*Yawning.*) How cold I am,

How sick of keeping record ! Oh, it stifles !

. . . The sea so very still,

And very straight the line against the sky,

As sometimes I have seen it drawn in books ;

While the day, coming gravely, promises

Continuance of itself. If the day wear

Silver and even to its close, and slowly

He drops down from his longing as a bird

Faint to its nest to die . . . still I am witness.

It stifles ! . . . I would bring his fate down
 on him,

Upgathered in my hands.

Would he were dead,

As safely dead as the eternal Kings

Encoffined in the centre of the earth !

[*While she has pierced the verge* TRISTAN *has been*
borne in by DUKE JOVELIN *and* KURVENAL.
She hastens down to him.

TRISTAN. No, pass within!—

ISEULT OF ARUNDEL. Your sentinel! . . .

TRISTAN. The watch

Is changed: I give you rest, Iseult.

[He lays his hand out for her to caress.

Farewell!

[ISEULT, without fondling him, passes to the tower, but pauses: over the top of the cliff for an instant a golden sail heaves into sight, lit by the risen sun; then it is lost behind the cliff.

ISEULT. The watch is changed!

[She gazes at the sail and goes within the tower.

TRISTAN. Father . . . a fancy! . . . sisters!

I see them in procession, two and two

Pass to the Ark . . . and those that are not
mated

Must pass alone.

DUKE JOVENAL. Dear son . . .

TRISTAN. I must be parted from your grief; it
haunts me.

Keep her within!

[DUKE JOVENAL goes away, weeping.

TRISTAN strokes KURVENAL'S hand.

Now I am dying, all

I need is some one prompt to answer me,

Whatever it is in my heart to ask.

KURVENAL. But give me some command, some-
thing to do

After . . . if you are dying!

TRISTAN (*raising himself*). Kurvenal,

I would be buried with my foster-parents
Deep inland, buried where the grass spreads
flat,

Wild and neglected. I would be forgotten.

KURVENAL. But I shall visit you.

TRISTAN. The bees will visit !

It is my will—deep inland.

KURVENAL. Think !—

It may be that the Queen will come, and then ?

TRISTAN. Oh, to and fro they pass, the many
ships,

Kurvenal, to and fro : it does not matter ;

For none have any haven.

KURVENAL. But some message !

You are thinking of your many voyages—

If she should come too late ?

TRISTAN. Farewell, farewell : Death in its open
letters

Will front her with the word.

Now let me be ;

For I must take last parting from myself.

. . . It lingers and it hurts.

[*He remains quiet ; KURVENAL paces.*]

KURVENAL. He suffers, oh, he is suffering in the
wilderness of this air, breathing in a waste !
The breath wells up of itself. And a sea is
stretching glassy to his face. There is no sail
across it—there cannot be ! And he does not
ask for a sail ; he gives no heed. So his mother

lay with him beside her in her agony, and did not fondle her babe any more. He is sinking away into infinite night, and heeds neither time nor light nor darkness.

[*Suddenly bending over* TRISTAN.

But this is darkness that one cannot wake :
And the sea's wavering tremor palpitates,
In vain . . . the tide is coming up—it stretches
Over the sand. . . . He loved the rising tide . . .
But though the dawn be shining, Arundel
Is dark for ever—loud be her lament !

TRISTAN (*in a murmur, with closed eyes*). ' Would I
were dead upon my Irish coast,
Dead on my shore ! ' . . . The great refrain
That is my passing bell !

She cannot come !
Are not our merchants sailing back to me
With the silk bales and treasure ? I perceive
Now in the dawning that she cannot come ;
That she is sitting by King Mark—as lonely
As fellow-Sphinxes guarding a great stair,
Indifferent to those that pass within,
To those that pass without.

[KURVENAL *has raised his head and watches
intently an emergent gold sail.*

Would we had died—
The only cup that we can ever drink
To overtake the cup of Destiny,
And spread its balm upon the bane ! Not now,
I would not now that she should come ! . . .

To leave her

Upon these ignorant and savage coasts . . .
 There must be no more meeting now,
 Nor parting any more—only the dark
 To creep up to our spirits as a tide ;
 And quiet graves for us—there must be graves,
 Where we shall rest in quiet.

[KURVENAL *is now beside* TRISTAN, *smiling down on him.*

KURVENAL. Wake, revive !

The ship is at the beach.

TRISTAN. You see her, Kurvenal ?

KURVENAL (*at the edge of the balcony*). Close, close

I see her . . . and the cup of Tours

Is in her hand : she is most glorious

In crown and purple robes.

TRISTAN (*his hands tight over his eyes*). Go, Kurvenal,
 within !

Let none salute the Queen . . . stretch wide the
 door. [*Waving his hands despairingly.*

Keep them within ! I cannot bear the tumult.

She should have worn disguise, she should have
 come

In secret as a magic healing Power,

Or as a leper, or an anchorite. . . .

O Kurvenal !

See that none look upon her. . . .

Turn the helm,

Turn the helm backward to the Irish coast,
 Back to her mother. . . .

[KURVENAL goes out: TRISTAN lies in swoon.
*After some moments ISEULT of IRELAND enters
 with KAHEDIN. Merchants behind her leaving
 spices and a flask of wine.*

KAHEDIN. Queen, but he is passed !

ISEULT. No, no ! Not dead ; he is not dead . . .

[*She kneels by him.*

He tarries,

And cannot die more than a king expectant
 For news of a great battle. . . . Tristan, Tristan !
 Listen ! I streamed

The sail in calm as a wide bannerole,

Held wide before a host . . . By night

I burned it red with torches : day and night

The sail has been assured ; the sail rose up

Before the land . . . Tristan, the sail rose up !

KAHEDIN. Oh, he is passed !

ISEULT (*more desperately*). No, no !

And if he were—I could arouse the dead. . . .

Tristan . . . as if I called you from the woods,

Tristan . . . as if I called you from the sea,

Tristan . . . as if you heard me from Tintagel,

Striving amid the gulleys. . . .

Tristan, Tristan !

[*He opens his eyes.*

I am come . . . Iseult !

TRISTAN (*faintly to KAHEDIN*). The ship is in the
 port ?

. . . The ship !

For you will bear her home? . . .

And all will be,
Beloved, as it had never been !

[In a voice of triumph.

How firm

The jewels dartle from her crown !

*[ISEULT, with a shriek, falls prone across the
foot of the bed.*

Oh, save her !

See, they are pressing in. . . .

*Re-enter, at the sound of the shriek, ISEULT of ARUNDEL
her father, KURVENAL, and a crowd of servants*

KAHEDIN (*to his sister*). Keep back, hold back !

ISEULT OF ARUNDEL. But I will be the mirror
To take the last stain of his breath. . . . What
hinders ?

[Dragging back QUEEN ISEULT by her hair.

Dead, dead ! Is this his hope ?—

A crown fallen off

Amid the meshes of long, golden hair !

DUKE JOVELIN. Peace, child . . . peace, peace !
His soul is on the verge ;

Let it put forth in peace !

*[He violently snatches his child to his arms : the
golden hair of QUEEN ISEULT, still held in
ISEULT of ARUNDEL'S hand, is spread out wide ;
sunlight falls on it.*

TRISTAN (*fixing his eyes on it, as on a golden sail*).
The ship ! *[He dies.*

EPILOGUE

The Minster Church of Arundel

TRISTAN and ISEULT are laid out side by side before the altar. ISEULT is covered from sight under her golden sail.

ISEULT of ARUNDEL, in black weeds, stands beside the bier

KING MARK, with BRANGAENA, KURVENAL and a train of Cornish Nobles, advances through the mourning people, past DUKE JOVELIN and KAHEDIN, straight to the corpses.

He stands for a long interval before TRISTAN, then turns to ISEULT of ARUNDEL

MARK. Open your heart to me ; and have no fear.
I make no claim on anything. My palace,
Strong on Tintagel's rock, fades twice a year
Before my sight : I have seen all things pass.

ISEULT OF ARUNDEL. Take her away !

MARK. But they must lie together.
I dare not sever them in death, I dare not.

Here let them rest.

I bade Brangaena tell you,
As she has poured into my ears, the tale
How they drank wine together, wine her mother
Had steeped in wizard passion of her prayers :
The hands that bore the draught were hands of
Fate :

These the appointed lips, these, these !—

*(He looks long into TRISTAN'S face ; then
turns again to ISEULT of ARUNDEL).*

O child of Arundel,
There is one freedom that we kings must
grant—

We must not intercept the arrow's flight ;
We must not dam the river from the sea ;
And when the eagle swoops above our flock
We must remember him the bird of Jove.

ISEULT of ARUNDEL. Remove them from me ; bear
the dead away !

MARK *(leading her to TRISTAN)*. See, the face softens !
[She struggles to speak.

Child, no more confession.

The face is softening—that is all our peace.
There shall be at Tintagel royal tombs,
Set but a little way apart. A rose,
Tristan, for thee—a rose to stretch itself
In briars and angry branches and great falls
Of blossom on the neighbour tomb. A vine . . .
Ah, so I dream the fairy monument ;
I can no longer dream.

Brangaena, straight

Unveil your mistress !

[She unwraps ISEULT of IRELAND, and her beauty spreads like incense through the Minster. The people instinctively kneel and fall to prayer, burying their faces : but MARK remains standing, and as he looks at the two lovers, now resting side by side in transfigured beauty, the words escape his lips.]

Pray for us !

[A long triumphant strain of music thrills the air ; then a fanfare is heard ; and the long, triumphant strain of music passes upward out of the church to be lost in the air of heaven.]

D I A N

‘QUEEN OF EARTH AND HEAVEN AND HELL’

A Fantasy

PERSONS

FRANÇOIS I., King of France.

HENRI, his son, afterwards Henry II.

FRANÇOIS, CHARLES, HENRI, the children of Henri by Catherine de Médicis.

CHARLES DE GUISE, Cardinal of Lorraine.

FRANÇOIS DE GUISE, Duke of Lorraine.

ANNE DE MONTMORENCY, Connétable de France.

NOSTRADAMUS, an Astrologer.

JANNEQUIN, a Musician.

JEAN GOUJON, a Sculptor.

LE DOCTEUR VÉSALE, a Physician.

BRUSQUET, Fool and Dwarf.

CATHERINE DE MÉDICIS, wife to Henri.

DIANE DE POYTIER, mistress to Henri.

MARGUERITE D'ANGOULÊME, sister to François I.

MARIE STUART, wife to Henri's son François.

DIANE DE FRANCE, daughter to Henri by Diane.

ANGELA, an Italian Nurse.

HÉLÈNE, CASSANDRE, ASTRÉE, HÉLOÏSE, women to Diane.

*A Steward, Messengers, Attendants, Knights and
Ladies of the Petite Bande.*

DIAN

‘QUEEN OF EARTH AND HEAVEN AND HELL’

PROLOGUE

‘Donec totum impleat orbem.’

Saint-Vallier. A May evening: the chestnuts are in flower, and below them the thorns, still whiter; the grass is patterned over with daisies. A great stag passes among the boughs, through which his head alone is visible. A quarter of the moon now shows at the edge of a chestnut-tree. Then a lovely child, dressed in green and white, comes out of the bosage, stands and listens.

DIANE. No, no! She is not here! Should the old woman

Creep from Saint-Vallier, nor have kept her word,
She is not worth a shout nor an old song
This woody month of May . . .

A-ha! The smell—
Warm—of a little shrine! Madonna-month,
And all its incense here.

A slip of moon,

And white flowers clouding round me and green
 grass,
 And dew beneath the daisies—we all waiting,
 Not as with any hope . . . it is more fresh !

*An old crone steals out from the under-darkness
 of the chestnuts*

GIPSY. My lucky lady,
 My saviour. . . . Ah, my lady, that I live,
 That your sweet voice over your father's harshness
 Has kept old Jeanne upon the earth to bless
 you !
 Ah, lady, lady ! . . .
 You saved a head of snow, sweet head of gold !
 See, see, my head of snow !
 But you, child, shall be young, year in, year out ;
 Till all your years fall you shall yet be young.

DIANE. Dame Jeanne, but I would be
 A woman, like my mother, Jeanne de Poytiers.
 It seems a rude, cold thing still to be young.

GIPSY. The child ! My beauty,
 Those gifts that come to bless are never known,
 Because the stars that are of night confer them,
 Or gods that are not of the night nor day !
 Stretch out your hand !
 By the pale Moon, your fingers
 Have crescent-points ! Let mine play round these
 fingers . . .
 And hear old Jeanne. If you would guard your
 youth—

And youth is fugitive as yonder doe
 After the leading stag—then guard my counsel :
 Plunge in the beautiful water of the dawn,
 Or in the fountain's pressing core of ice ;
 Let the Moon shine upon an unsalved visage,
 Dim with the very warmth of sleep : forsake
 not

The lustrous power of forests and of wealds,
 Their clear and eager sanctitude, the chase,
 The falcon balanced in the sky,
 All bold, fresh things, all rustle of clean life,
 The running of the hunted stag, the ardour
 Of the hounds' cry . . . pursue it to the
 depths

Of echoes that have lost their depth, pursue it
 On to the rim of beauty, the recess
 Of beauty. Hunt,
 Hunt on in dream and slack not !

DIANE. In the pools
 I bathe, nor touch my skin with balm or unguent
 To make its freshness sting me less at night ;
 I haunt the woods all day : and there is little,
 It seems, I yet must learn of gipsy lore,
 Except to cherish youth if time should come
 I long not to be older.

GIPSY. Now, farewell,
 Diane, Diane !

DIANE. Why speak so lingeringly
 My name ?

GIPSY. The Moon sails forth above the trees :

Full she has filled the world——

Diane, my kiss !

[The GIPSY embraces the child and goes out.]

DIANE. Is she some mighty witch,

This old Egyptian ? How I am left lone,

My name upon me as if newly named.

[The great stag lifts his head close to her ; she embraces his neck. There is plenitude of still moonlight. The hounds chime from the kennels.]

ACT I

SCENE I

Twenty years later

Paris. Saint-Germain ; DIANE is seated in the embrasure of a window. She is dressed in deep mourning, and she weeps. HENRI stands before her, silent ; she raises her head.

DIANE. Take comfort, Prince.

HENRI. I will not for your tears—
I will not. In the world there is no wrong
Like this that you are weeping.

Sénéchale,

These tears must check ; they fall on me at night,
They lash me from my sleep as cruel storms,
They beat upon me fiercely as the rain
Beats on a flood. . . . In mercy,
Seeing my sorrow is too much, my anger
Too young to comfort you, let your fair eyes
That can hold all things, as a flower
Holds to itself its fragrance, hold their rain.

DIANE. Take comfort, Prince ; your grief to me is
sharper
Than any of my own.

HENRI (*stooping to the edge of her raiment and kissing it*). You are white and black ; you are a widow now.

May I put on your colours ? Not the white
And green the poets sing—I cannot sing ;
I am too full . . . it is not like a song.

Give me your tears to dry them in my blood !

DIANE. To-morrow, at the tourney ? No, my Prince.

I am not wronged ; mine is a widow's dule,
Eternal, not to pass. You must not wear,
Dauphin, the colours of eternal dule.

HENRI (*springing closer to her*). But I shall wear them
constant as the habit

Of a dead man to his shroud.

DIANE. To-morrow's favour ?

HENRI. Constant as the habit
Of a dead man to his shroud.

I know that laughter
Will greet my strong presumption, as a child,
An acolyte, should in blank repetition
Rehearse the Mass . . . and must it be your
laughter ?

I am shy, flouted by the King ;
I have been many years in prison too ;
And many years I have been dumb :
I thought that I was praying when I spoke.
How still you sit !

DIANE. I am listening, Prince, to music.

HENRI. If you could sit like that and make no sign,

But sit indifferent on,
Like that, when presently I yield my soul
For your glory at the jousts !

You have a beauty

That must not be dishevelled—in compassion
Continue it, that we may dream a statue
Is with us and no fear of its decay !

DIANE. I am listening still to music . . .

Enter KING FRANÇOIS

FRANÇOIS.

Hin !

But let me be a leper, if this is not
My son—la, la !—
Droning an elegy to the fair widow !
Satyr, your dull, black eyes
Burn on her as the torches of her dule.
Fie ! Fie ! It was deplorable to find her
Weeping her noble Brézé. Not a blink
Of sunshine till I came to visit her.
I was the Sun
That snuffed those candles out !

(*To DIANE.*) Have you forgotten ?

[*DIANE looks at him reproachfully.*]

Sa, sa, sa, sa !

Yet it was matter of delirious mirth
To see those candles ranged about the Moon—
And the untending thirsty clouds—a ! ho !
Diane impatient for the chase ! . . . She listened
In the dark chamber to the crannied mouse,

Or any the least knocking at the wall . . .
Diane, with Master Marot's psalms
Clung to her hand, and from her parted lips
Humblings and cries as inarticulate
As of dumb creatures when they are not dumb.
I nearly gave my ghost up to my God
With laughing at that chafing whiteness, set
In modo e figura Dian, widow !
Ha, ha ! Not Dian—Dido in her bed,
Weeping Sichaeus sore.

(*To HENRI.*) Staff of the Cross,
So do we use our hours ? Are we Æneas ?

[HENRI remains petrified.

Sirrah, the heralds are in sharp dispute
Upon some points . . . your homage and attend !

[HENRI bows and goes out.

Bat of Valladolid, I loathe the boy !
What dungeon sighs, what stares ! He pules
at me

As if he grudged me still
That he was hostage for the crown of France,
To monachal, sour Spain—a bat, a cloistered owl !
[*Sitting down by her cosily.*

I grudge his ransom. Is there François in him ?
What is he, for an heir ?

DIANE. Alack, he has been long in prison, Sire.

FRANÇOIS. Oh, my dear lady, when I was a boy

I was full king, not only to my mother,

Not to my perfect Marguerite, to all

My retinue of youngsters—Marin de Montchenu,

Montmorency and Guillaume de la Mark,
And Philippe Chabot : but this gloomy Dauphin
Has of his age no friends ; haunting the Court
Suspiciously as he were still a hostage,
He brushes among women with the deafness
And grunting of a boar.

[*Looking in DIANE's face.*

But you are patient,

Marvellous patient, cloudy Luna.

DIANE.

Sire,

What is the suit ?

FRANÇOIS.

This little finger-tip !

God and St. Benedict, here have we state-craft—
A crescent-point like those that blandish sea-
waves

To run ashore ! Wind him about your finger,
Counsel him, rouse him from his dreams ! I fear
My tardy Dauphin never will be man,
Therefore appeal to catch you, Sénéchale,
To such a business you shall lead alone
With none for coadjutor. Willy-nilly
Our Dauphin binds us fast to Rome and binds us
To Italy, our sovereign Italy,
As husband to Pope Clement's niece—this girl
Of listening eye, a chit of wisdom, gay
As innocence . . . ha, moss above, below
Some rotten kind of stuff, a Médicis.
The child amuses ! He has wedded her
At our command, but, sullen as a mule,
The boy turns from his bride, embarrassing

Our friendship with Pope Clement, by the fashion
Of his dull conduct and discourtesy.

Temper him, noble Matron, change his nature
According to the prevalence he follows ;

Turn him to duty and to virtual aim

In marriage, no more feelingly resisted

Than glowed brass by the vision that a sun

Endazzles from the heaven. [DIANE *is silent*.

It made me merry

To find him playing at the Turtle-dove,

Metamorphosed by Venus. S  n  chale,

Complete, magnetic, sting his blockishness

To flower of youth. Give him some countenance—

Black-spotted weasel, handsome,

If once his face were turned to human cheer.

A dreary, sullen, sleepy child ! I hate him

[DIANE *is still silent*.

Did not your good devotion win from me

Your father's forfeit life ? Win from my son

What traces of his father lie in cloud

Beneath a surly Spaniard. By God's Body,

I beg a royal thing of you, *ma Belle*,

To mould us France.

You smile ? *Hoc fac et vinces !*

So ! And the task, the generous victory

Shall wean you from your sorrow. You and I

Cannot breathe captive. Let us then forget !

Why run to Death, since memory is a cell

Of the tomb-owning Monster ? Nay, I 'd rather . . .

But cast those murky sables and be gallant

In velvet of my favoured gooseberry-green,
This skin would prick to goldness, challenging.
Listen, fair Victrix, Help-in-Season ! Listen !
Be Dian to Endymion, and Lucina
To France, protectress of her future Kings.

DIANE. Madame la Duchesse

D'Estampes were better to this purpose, younger,
More apt.

FRANÇOIS. My Duchess ! Is it jealousy

Of my young mistress that provides a rival ?
She is not half your age !—tut, tut !—a crude,
Young fruit, and not the perfect, lapping flower
Of your maturity. To have you jealous—
My triumph ! But, alas, for Winter, Spring ;
And for rude Ver the mellow Summer-eve
With its moon-rising, and moon-setting dawn.
My Duchess—la !

He did not see her when we rode together
To bring the captive home ; she laughed at
him

Dangling your skirts. Ho, ho ! My little son !
My childilollie !

Make a man of him !

Madame de Brézé, give him of your counsel !
This little Médicis, beneath your guidance,
Must bear him many children, you prevailing
As goddess of his altars, where his heart
And all his joys are rendered.

DIANE.

Sire,

Your suit is granted.

FRANÇOIS (*surprised and doffing low*). Then I take
my leave.

[He goes to the arras, wonders and comes back.

I never cry but when I have no joy.

We have none, who must laugh the whole day long.

DIANE. But share it, fool, but share it—

Since it is wisdom to you, share my joy.

BRUSQUET. Unfold it, Madam.

DIANE.

Brusquet,

I am beloved. . . . O witless fool,

You do not ask by whom.

BRUSQUET (*simply*). The Dauphin. Fie, fie, fie!

I do not hazard impious conjectures,

For the good Dauphin half an hour ago

Threw his arm . . . thus! . . .

Right round my neck and wept.

I paint you, Madam,

His very action, as it is my trade,

And no offence.

DIANE. But what should follow, fool?

The Dauphin weeps as you have seen me weep.

Has he not bitter cause? As if still captive

I pass him oftentimes

Sitting in deep embrasures by himself.

How should you think I am beloved of him?

BRUSQUET (*very softly*). He gave no sign: it was the matching tears.

I counted them—they fell just of one number:

Two on the cheek, one coursing down the nose

Most fellowly . . . and they were drops of gold.

I caught two on my hand . . .

[DIANE *takes his hand and kisses it.*

He loves you, Madam.

DIANE. Swear on your bells, swear it by Cupid's blindness.

BRUSQUET. No, no—the matching tears
Are my sole warranty.

DIANE. Brusquet, he carries
My colours at the tourney, on his helm,
His doublet and his cloak — not white and
green,
But white and black — the colours of my
dile.

BRUSQUET. He loves you, Madam . . .

DIANE (*suddenly*). Has the Dauphine risen?
Is she within?

BRUSQUET. Madam, there may be many
Princesses, queens, and lawful spouses. Take
This word of folly : have no eye for them,
No ear, no angry tongue. He loves you, Madam.
[*Exit BRUSQUET, kissing his hand to her.*]

DIANE. How many years? There is so little time!
[*She takes a crystal hour-glass and watches
the sand trickling through.*]

Henri ! *O mes délices !*

I think the purport
Of age is to lay out before our eyes
The entire and perfect spectacle of youth. . . .
A year ago he poured into my lap
Jonquils and violets : it troubled me ;
It seemed part of a pageant or a riddle
It were my death to read . . .

A WOMAN (*at the door*). Madame la Dauphine !

CATHERINE DE MÉDICIS *enters with her women. She is dressed in rose-coloured velvet. She makes a curtsey.*

DIANE (*rising*). Nay ! Can I ask forgiveness ?

You were the first to do me reverence.

There has been error. Let me sit beside you.

What ! Are there tears and pallor on a face

That is a stranger's !

(*To the Women.*) Leave us.

CATHERINE.

Not my women !

DIANE. All of the retinue.

[*She waves them away ; then puts her arm round CATHERINE.*

Unfold your grief.

You are shy, sad ; you are very shy. *Cher enfant !*

But what is at the sources of your tears ?

Unfold your grief.

CATHERINE (*suspiciously*). Madame la Sénéchale,

You are the Dauphin's friend.

DIANE.

I would befriend you.

Yours is so high a destiny and pressed

So suddenly upon you. Dry your eyes !

This dusky-coloured hair, if brodered richer

With certain jewels, may take satin sheen ;

But I must choose the jewels. You misdoubt

That you can please him, Dauphine ?

CATHERINE.

Why, he hates me

More, as I love him more.

DIANE. His father loves you.

CATHERINE. That is not enough.

DIANE. You love him? you would have him for
your own?

CATHERINE. I do desire it.

DIANE. Afterward as Queen?

CATHERINE (*vehemently*). I do desire to be a Queen,
his Queen!

I do desire to have him for my own,
All to myself. He is too fond of jousting,
And he escapes me.

DIANE. Can you bear instruction?

CATHERINE. Of any in authority. Your place? . . .

DIANE. The child! I am not this or that, the
matron

Chosen to give you guidance, nor appointed
To rule your household.

Let us speak as women!

You love the Dauphin? Ay!

With all the blinking of these diamond eyes;

And you would be beloved. Is he not hand-
some?

[CATHERINE *sighs and draws from her breast
a miniature.*

DIANE. That is an exercise—you cannot judge—

That is a thing painted for Italy,

A bauble of no worth. Put it away.

It would displease him.

CATHERINE. You are bold to drop it

So sudden from your hands—it is the portrait

Of your young Prince . . .

But you may braid my hair.

DIANE (*dropping the braids*). The Dauphine and his wife—will that suffice ?

Would you thus savour majesty ? There is
A Queen now of the Court, and so neglected,
And of so poor account she did not even
Advance to welcome you. I welcomed you ;
I had been so entreated.

CATHERINE. Henri bade you ?

DIANE. The Dauphin wooed me,
And on his knees, to save him from that meeting,
For he is shy and young.

Would you look on him
Such as he is—the traits of this medallion

[*Drawing one from her breast.*

Are art that has sucked nature as a flower
Sucks dew and then appears more perfect
flower.

CATHERINE (*pettishly*). No likeness !

DIANE. None of anything that you,
Poor child, have ever caught or will encounter.
Does it not even fascinate you ?

[CATHERINE *silently gazes at the portrait,*
then her eyes fill with tears.

Stay !

If you would learn the secret which it holds—
It is a captive's face and more, an exile's.
I wonder, have you spirit fine enough
To dote in pity on the weariness

Of these dull eyes that, like an animal's,
Have but the beauty of their loving?

CATHERINE (*her hand on the medallion*). Give it!

DIANE. No!—but you have it. Is he not your
bridegroom? [*Half to herself.*

The shell, the husk, the shadow and the name,
Even these are dear possessions.

CATHERINE. He abhors me;
I am distasteful to him. [*Grasping DIANE'S hand.*
Sénéchale,

Something you said of satin in my hair,
If you would twist it right?

[DIANE looses a chain of beryl from her neck and
twists it into CATHERINE'S fine dark hair.
CATHERINE catches sight of herself in a mirror.
She lifts up her arms to DIANE and lays them
round her neck.

All the new dances
Of Florence, the new games—I am very quick
At games—and I will show you every point:
You are not quick at games?

DIANE (*smiling*). But if la Dauphine,
Will suffer me to guide her . . .

Listen, *petite*,
That is Prince Henri's voice, and calling me.
Child, you have much to learn!

So!—I have braided
This satin hair to catch his eye, and, if
You will defer to me, you will find favour.
Now, do not sulk and do not speak a word.

Re-enter HENRI, calling

HENRI. Diane, my lady, O Diane——

DIANE. You shame me
Ringing my name as we were in the woods.
You fright our little Princess.

To beguile
This hour so tedious to her, I have sung
Your praises ; we have glanced at portraits too—
And I have lost all knowledge of the hour,
Wreathing her hair.

CATHERINE (*timidly*). Madam is very deft,
So deft : it is all Madam's art.

[*She bows her head for inspection. The eyes of
HENRI and DIANE meet over the small, wreathed
head.*

HENRI (*mastering himself*). Good, good !
I will conduct you straightway to the King :
He loves these points and sparkles.

CATHERINE. And these beryls
Are Madam's ; she unclasped the necklace.

HENRI. Good !
They are become crown-jewels by her gift :
You shall have all the homage.

Do not render
These beryls back to her again. I like
That you should wear them in your glossy hair
So, as the Duchess willed.

[HENRI takes CATHERINE'S hand and leads
her quickly away, leaving DIANE alone.]

DIANE.

Is it in pique ?

The beryls were not of his gift. He touches
Her cheek ; she glows so in his pride of her :
Like a small lizard she is beautiful.
King François tells me I must do this thing,
Foster this marriage. . . .

The crown-jewels hers
And of his gift ; ay, and the crown as well,
If she bear children. . . . He is passed away
Lifelong from me ! My gift . . .
What can my gift be to him but the years ?
I must go back, must seek
The violets, in my nature, of my youth ;
They are bleeding for him, all my sweetness
bleeds.

I will not mind the King. I will transgress
All honour, I will wash
My eyes with tears. . . . The fountain of my
tears,
I fear, will break my heart ! But I will suffer ;
I will do anything to be beloved
For ever of him.

Henri ! Long ago

I loved him on my knee, a black-haired babe ;
I loved him as a child just broke from prison,
I have loved him in my dule, incredulous
That he could love me. . . .

It may be in sport,
In dream ; it may be he will cast me off.
If he should cast me off ! . . .

[*She bows herself, weeping bitterly. HENRI stands before her, a curious smile on his face.*

HENRI. I have left her with the King. Why are you weeping ?

Diane, this heavenly rain—

This softness—

[*He kneels.*

April !

I broke the cloud ?

Are the rich clouds for me ? Too marvellous

It were if you could love me in this sort—

Nothing to come between. Could I believe . . .

If I should dare ! Are the rich clouds for me ?

[*DIANE kisses his raised hands and swiftly leaves him.*

Could I believe the miracle—believe

I broke the cloud !

SCENE II

Paris. The Dauphin's bedchamber at Saint-Germain. Courtiers move about with jewels and ornaments.

HENRI *finishes his dressing to strains of exquisite music. For an instant he prostrates himself before a Crucifix : then he rises, and, with a movement of his hand, dismissing his courtiers, he approaches his Musicians, among them JANNEQUIN, and embraces them one by one.*

HENRI. Beloved, beloved. . . . Community of loved ones !

My notes of music ! Gratitude
Is mine—how shall I say it with my lips ?—
As for the dew that lustres my young roses,
As for the dayspring that provides the day
Its streams of freshness. Music !

[*As he breaks from them.*

Pass

And let me hear your voices ; as a flock
Drops in a vale, and with a wider movement
Ascends to clothe the hill. . . .

I cannot part from you without a hope !

[*He touches a viol.*

Enter my prayers—these flying prayers
That are my thoughts in solitude. Ascend !

[*The Musicians retire and are seen above in a
distant gallery. JANNEQUIN returns. HENRI
has seated himself at a table and plays with a
pen.*

JANNEQUIN.

Monsieur le Dauphin,

What music for the *coucher* ?

‘ Chant de l’Alouette ’

Is for the *lever* ? But your favoured trifle
‘ Caquet des Femmes ’—shall we repeat the air ?
. . . O women, women, and their music-babble
Is for all hours, the morning, noon or night ?
What music for the *coucher* ?

[HENRI sits blank.

Monsieur le Dauphin,

Unless . . . It must depend . . .
There is a music glows like Hesperus.

If my lord Dauphin please
To comfort the lone Dauphine, newly wedded,
Since he allows me access to his heart,
And sorrow for the colours of its grief . . .
There is a music bridal, prevalent,
Epithalamium. Vivace! Prince,
'Twould give you recompense : the sorriest feast
Vouched from the gallery with sound of rebecks
Is eaten as untasted ; appetite
Itself being dulcet-quickenened by the ear.
Would you give order to your chamberlain . . .

HENRI. O Jannequin, are you King François' spy ?
But if you are—let him divert the child,
That he is making Queen before my face,
Before my mother's face. There is no Queen
But my dead mother—there I am bereaved.

[JANNEQUIN *comes close and caresses him.*

I cannot !

JANNEQUIN. Listen ! I have been persuaded
And of the King, and of the Médicis,
And of the noble Sénéchale herself.

HENRI (*springing up*). *Enfer!* La Sénéchale !

JANNEQUIN. If you could so estrange your life, your
senses . . .

HENRI. O Jannequin, but you are not your music.

Leave me alone ! [Exit JANNEQUIN.

What of these days before me now ? . . . My God,
What of my youth ? Why should I rise
To the hours that are my doom ? I know the
weight

Of the heavy-weighted hours and the long softness
Of the tears that wet their sands. [*He listens.*

Ha, music, music !

It is not then all lost. This music comes
Back on myself even as the wind blows back
Her roses on the rose !

*[A song of his own is heard sung from
the distant gallery.]*

Endymion—

When the moon is gone
And the shepherd lone with his flocks,
In the dells and rocks—
What should the shepherd sing
To the flocks at watering ?

Good care he gives to his sheep—
As a shepherd his flocks should keep :
He lays him down in the noon,
And dreams of the cool, full moon.
Awake, he is like a king,
As they crowd to the watering :
So good is a dream to men
As a contest of viols. Amen !

[He listens rapt, nursing his knee.]

One must forgive her silence to the moon—
How should she so behold herself, except
Below in the white fields,
And on the glimmering haystacks and the ponds ?
What sorrow, burning sorrow, I am poet
Never to her : to none

But to the Lady Music. She, I think,
Has been shut up in prison many years,
Has waked in prison and her chains struck off.
Diane! But did she crave her shepherd's
pipe?

Never!—Endymion's pipe . . .

I must put back my gifts—the resonance
Is not for her!

Diane, and she would have me vulgar—she
Would so profane! Fah, let my father urge
Heirs for the kingdom, lineage, royal stock—
The future, I must honour as a slave!

Diane, Diane! . . .

I must put back within myself the *coffret*
Of the jewels that I wrought for her: I swear
It is more precious to me than her love.

This loneliness

I build up in my spirit from her ken
Is a fierce refuge. Is it thus with lovers?
Must it be ever thus?

*Enter the LORD CHARLES, Cardinal of Lorraine.
He salutes the DAUPHIN, then advances affairé*

CARDINAL. You are brooding, Dauphin?

HENRI. Ay, Lord Charles, a riddle
And an enigma to you all? What claim
Shortens the narrow limits of the hour
I claim for meditation?

CARDINAL. Nay, my Prince,
I would not so abridge your prayers. 'Tis Cupid

That as an apparition puts to flight
Our holy thoughts and weans us from our prayers.
HENRI (*angrily*). I shall not hunt to-day.
CARDINAL (*shrugging his shoulders as he seats himself*).
To-day—Blood of the Cross!—to-day the king
Hunts with your wife.

And it is not from him,
Nor from the slender, coy audacity
Of an Italian mistress I take orders :
But from the Lady Sénéchale I come,
And to convey her pleasure. She has noted
A trouble, a distaste about your moods.
'The Dauphin'—so I quote . . . how heavenly-fine
Her observation!—'has an eye unquiet,
Fevered, distrustful of the flagrant lights
The Médicis requires. He suffers.' Then,
Dauphin, with angel's tenderness we Churchmen
Can but adore and envy—then she bade me,
As armed with the strong impress of a dream,
Creep to your privacy . . . for she has business
In the little desert garden of the roses
Beyond the cypress grove.

She will not hunt.
She has refused the call, nor will you find her
Among her nymphs. She bade you bring your
lute,
And strike among the boscaje such a strain
As lures the goddess to her mortal. Dauphin,
Fresh from the bath she met me, and inspired
As from the sacred well-spring of the Muses.

A lute was in her hand. [Crossing his legs.

My Office said,

I must repair to that most sacred garden,
To smell the roses, and to catch the descant
Of the nightingales enchanted to the Moon.

[HENRI is gone quietly to fetch out his lute ; he
puts on his plumed cap and turns toward a
private egress.

La, what a bird for the gin ! Her adroitness had
failed ; she had offended, giving her company
to Madame la Dauphine, and could only dis-
cover the matter of her offence, in nowise its
cure. She appealed to me. I found he was
living *en garçon* and in frequent conference with
musicians. I found Jannequin setting verses
to music. La ! what a bird for the gin !

But this Diane—solid, invincible, she is as a
statue in our Paris, as a beautiful statue. She
is France.

[He picks up a half-written page lying on
the table, and goes out reading and
chuckling.

SCENE III

Paris. The Gardens at Saint-Germain. A little semi-circular ruin with open columns round, steps leading up to it. On these steps KING FRANÇOIS is seated with his Petite Bande. All the ladies are dressed in gooseberry-green or mulberry-

coloured velvet with silver sleeves. The KING'S arm is round CATHERINE DE MÉDICIS.

KING FRANÇOIS. Mignonne,
Are we not hidden safely ? Will D'Estampes
Suspect us in a ruin ? Fah, she preaches
Religion to me—the unholy credence
Of heretics—and all the while her face
Goes preaching from its wrinkles I am old.
But you, my plums, soft in your youth and merry
In the immortal creed of being young,
You, my green fruitage of the gardens, you
That lift my hours up from their sorry weight,
I am your sylvan Pan. My Nymphs—your
Pan !

CATHERINE. O Sire,
You with your converse of the heavens, discour-
coursing
To us your policies of light and time,
Ripen our days.

*[The KING kisses her on her mouth and
cuddles her.]*

KING FRANÇOIS. Fine Mignonne,
My little Politician—ah, we settle
What heretics shall suffer in the squares ;
Or shall the Turk be knit to us—the Turk !
But, hush, my little mouse of Florence, hush !
To-day, no politics . . .
Here I am come to brood my sadness out ;
Here I am brooding as an ancient Pan,

The Captain of the Oreads, Nymphs, and Dryads,
Who, his long beard stroked toward his nose,
conceives

The world and all the caverns underneath,
The graves, the hollow centuries before,
Th' affrighting hollow centuries behind.
When one is aging, every dusty proverb
And fable shoots up wisdom ; but, *mes enfants*,
We must not think ; we must refuse all mirrors,
Even the faces of our friends in time.
Mirrors be broken, friends of the old years
Removed from vision ! Only let me see
Youth, youth, the red and green, the infantine !

[*Yawning.*

Come, I am heavy—rise !
Dance me a stately dance ; and you must lead
them,
My little *Médis* . . . you know the step—
My favourite—*Des Lavandières*. Beat hands.
Lo, Brusquet !

Enter the Fool

Strike your jester's lute, my Fool !
Here are life's maskers.

[*They dance the Branle des Lavandières :*
then a Pavane.

Life !

The fulness—motion, the round amplitude !
The coil and rustling splendour of the colours !
O Titian, were you here—brush to my wisdom,

Arresting what I live by ! Play more slowly,
Fool, for your dancers, slow !
That I may linger with these forms of youth.
May God preserve me a few years to linger
Where beauty is, where cloudless faces mingle.
Ha, ha, my little Médicis, your stepping
Is as the prance of Flora's self
Across the bosomy hills in April-time.
You pant ! Break off !
God's sake, if you should dance away a prince !
I was indeed to blame !

[CATHERINE returns to his side out of breath ;
he caresses her and makes her comfortable.]

BRUSQUET. Uncle of France,
Here comes duet for chorus !

[A sound of laughter and the touching of
two lutes is heard.]

Wish, hish, hish !

[The DAUPHIN HENRI and DIANE pass in front
of the group, in their black and white dresses,
absorbed and unheeding. The KING whistles,
and they pause.]

KING FRANÇOIS. Black on the picture ! Black !—
You sting me ! Nay, my lady Sénéchale,
We have one secret, you and I,
We have one wisdom. . . . He is young, though
black. [With a malicious laugh.
I take my medicine for years in syrups
Of cinnamon and mentha, red and green . . .
You, my superb, in black mandragora—

Our tastes—but the same wisdom. You and I . . .

[*The Petite Bande laughs on many soft notes.*]

DIANE. Sire ?

KING FRANÇOIS. Go your way ! The Dauphin
blushes red

Out of all limit of your black and white,
Betraying your staid colours. Lady Sénéchale,
Drop that suspended finger on the lute ;
The air yearns for it ; draw your young musician
Along with you, closing suspension, lady.

DIANE (*smiling*). Ever to be obeyed !

[*She touches the note, and HENRI, making
obeisance to the KING, without looking,
moves away with her.*]

KING FRANÇOIS.

Ho, ho !

My little Médicis, a cloud—no clouding !

I am full sun upon your fortune, child . . .

He but the Dauphin, and you Queen of France

O my Italian daughter,

The devil take me to my grave, if once

I make declension from the life, the arts

And the new learning of your Italy !

O my Italian,

But I am sad again ! These Spanish fashions,

Their sables and cold silver—faugh, these zealots,

These lovers shod with love, not winged with
lightness

Of variable Eros, trailing moonlight

And darkness on the present ! . . .

Little winds,
Strange little winds are loosed—I know not
whither

They go, nor why they are . . . a sad, old Pan
Withering among his nymphs. [Rising.

Break up the band!

My daughter Catherine, we will hunt together,
And you shall hunt astride across such country
As woman's sideways-sitting could not vanquish.

[He lays his hands on her shoulder and walks
feebly on.]

Like a pale boy, you with the pale, sick King,
King François, dying, dying—

Shall hunt, the very Queen of Venery.

No matter for those Lutinists—those zealots . . .

God's Mass, I hate a Spaniard as the devil—
As black Mephisto. . . .

All stir up the hunt !

SCENE IV

Anet : beside a fountain, deep in the heron-wood

*Enter together the Lord Cardinal CHARLES DE LOR-
RAINE and the Connétable ANNE DE MONT-
MORENCY.*

MONTMORENCY. Bells !

CARDINAL.

. . . Ah ! the bells

Of the homing cattle through the forest—listen !

Still deep in leaves the chime, as though fay-music

Rang us out of the coverts from their midst
To guide us home. 'Tis late. That levelness—
There!—of a white ray is the great owl's wing.
What, bide his gipsy-music when the cattle
Have rung us home!

MONTMORENCY. But, Cardinal,
When this fay-music shook along the brakes
The Prince was no more of our company.
Where is the Prince?

CARDINAL. Shall we not ask where lamps
Our Lady Glow-worm of this forest-side,
And then the Prince were found? Montmorency,
Do all the lost pant for their finding? Seek him!
Nay, rather yield him to the dusk Sylvani,
And to the shadows where he watches shining
His spell of snow-keen bait. Are not these
flambeaux—

That make the banks an air of nether lights,
The moss and grass, impenetrable cloud,
Lit to induce the mate into Love's circle,
From his dark vigil 'mid the glooms of earth?
Call our saints down upon the Dauphin. . . . Pass!
Ha, ha, these glow-worms and these holy places!
The saints upon the Dauphin! Let us on!

MONTMORENCY. Is the moon rising?

CARDINAL. When the clouds
Are velvet and one seems to smell their softness
As fragrance, they are hiding-places chosen
By the ascending moon . . .

MONTMORENCY. Quoit-players! Listen!

How the quoits ring like glass ! The players' voices,

How they are raised up underneath the moon,
Though far away ! To Anet ! Leave our Prince.

[They go out. A great stag stands for a while on the grass that is kindled with glow-worms. Then he leaps back into the shadow. After a while HENRI breaks through the forest-trees and throws himself down on the lawn by the fountain.]

HENRI. Lost, lost ! . . . The din

Of the lutes we played together, 'mid the roses !
And then King François ! . . . How I hate my
father ;

And grow outrageous in his presence, all
My powers put off as in a foreign land,
Before strange potentates ! He can discern
No King in me, so crowns the Dauphiness.
No Prince, no King !

And the great Sénéchale, who is as deaf
And foolish to my music as the fool,
Must bribe my Jannequin and hire us lutes
To thrum in company. . . . So lost,
So hideously lost . . . I flee

A madman from a mirror—not my face . . .

O Luna ! Struck ! Lost !

[He bows over the rim of the fountain. DIANE enters in her hunting-dress of white, with silver quiver.]

DIANE. But my musician . . .

HENRI.

Goddess !

DIANE.

But my poet ! . . .

*[She comes to him and bends above him,
speaking softly.]*

Endymion . . . Shut your eyes,
Be veritably lost from Time, and Dian
Will from infinitude and loneliness
Herself steal down to a forgotten prince,
Forgotten among sleepers of the night.

HENRI (*springing up defiantly*). A blinded shepherd !

. . . But you cannot know . . .

Not that—Actæon, by no hounds devoured,
But by the gnawing fury of his senses
At heaven dropt down on him. Who built the
temples,

The temples to the moon ?

Diane, I cannot speak to you. . . . My music
Speaks back but to myself ; the foolish verses
I stammer through my tears, but chill my tears.
You are mocking me. . . . My father mocks at me.
What is your cruel pleasure ? I escape—
I have escaped from Paris—from my father,
My bride . . . I have escaped . . . as fierce at heart
As any brigand of the woods, as blemished,
As desolate. In my captivity,
Diane, I thought of freedom as a roving,
Aimless and sorrowful . . . you succoured me,
You were my goal as is the living sun
The goal of every listless, growing thing :
Then you became a blight to me, a bane,
And the amazement of a curse that dooms me

Homeless and unassigned to pallid Hell.
My poetry, my music ! . . . yes, we chimed
The lutes together for a little while
In the Rose-garden ; yes, we breathed the roses
In the desert-garden of Saint-Germain—yes,
And read together *Amadis of Gaul* . . .
To me as my whole history and life,
To me who came, a child, from out a prison,
As Amadis a child from forth the sea.
They led me to you, and, as Amadis
Lost never from his memory the word
Of Oriana, how it pleased her well
That he should serve her, from my memory
Never will fail
Your kiss upon my forehead—as an angel
Sinks from closed pinions. . . . Listen ! . . . Oriana,
'Twas on soft herbage, 'neath the forest's cope,
Amadis had his joy for all his love,
And worst despair, by which a man may perish—
Joy for all this, joy on the greenwood grass . . .
No playing lovers in a gilded Court !
. . . Yes, we have chimed
The lutes together for a little while
In the Rose-garden ; yes, we breathed the roses,
And I am left more infinitely void,
More slowly dropping blood than when you held me
First at Bayonne and kissed me, but then dropped.
DIANE (*gathering Grass of Parnassus, and playing
with the fountain*). O water,
Blood-tinctured of my goddess, but he hurts us

With his fierce onslaught. . .

If I dropped the child,

It was . . . oh, sudden . . . as one puts away
A man from one's embrace.

[HENRI *looks at her silently.*

Goddess, he chides me !

Dian, I stoopt too low.

HENRI. More to your fountain: let me hear your prayer.

DIANE (*to the moon*). That I may dye him even as
my flesh

Is of these placid depths made gold—my prayer !

[She rises from the fountain.]

Nor will you ever speak to me of music,
Nor will you ever vex me with reproach ;
Nor serve me, dreaming as an idle shepherd—

[She lays her hand on his shoulder.

But in great feats of arms my chevalier.

Lo, all my forests with their scents and coverts
I hold in leash till you become a man.

Hippolytus, my hunter, votive to me
Your life in every breath. Such speckled hounds
As I will rear you, dogs of so fierce strain
No hand may touch them, but your hand—such
steeds

For you to dompt ! And we will hunt together.

Henri, the incommunicable joy
Of waking to the hunt ; the sounds
Of the young morning . . . Henri, and by moonlight
Together we will hunt the wolves. A Queen—

I would be Queen of Earth, not in the Court,
Here in the purlieu of my mountain forest,
Where the oak burthens, where the little aspens
Tingle above the pool : I would be Queen
Where the high echoes catch and every stillness
Has its own star and echo in the leaves.

[One of her little flowers is dropped.]

HENRI *picks it up.*

Beloved !

You hold my little flower wrapt in your hand—
I love it for its vernal breath, I love
All flowers that nod and startle through the
grass,

All flowers of my stag's mottle . . .

[He springs to embrace her.]

No, not yet !

Henri, beloved, look up !

Those clouds are horsemen . . . swift, ah, swift,
as those

Must be your course : and they attain the moon.

HENRI (*kneeling*). Forget

How young and sleeping in my qualities

I lie before you. Stoop to me, receive me !

[She kisses him.]

The sweetness of a universe let down

On one poor, young, closed heart !

[There is rustle among the bushes.]

A VOICE.

Where is His Highness ?

DIANE. A messenger ! We will receive him, Prince—
Trembling nor fugitive.

VOICE.

Where is His Highness ?

[DIANE *is about to reply* ; HENRI *puts his hand across her lips.*

HENRI. Here at the King's command.

Saddle my horse.

[*The bushes are still.* HENRI and DIANE *kiss.*

DIANE. Leave me thy heart !

[*They walk a little way in silence.*

. . . But you forget—

HENRI (*laughing low*). The King's command ? I am myself a King.

[*He turns away and leaves her. His voice a little way off.*

O Ronsard, true ! not Anet—Dianet.

DIANE. There is no death in love, except this death,
And stopping of Love's breath by lovers' hands—
This parting. . . . How I love him,
So wild and royal ; it is like a curse
To bear his shining eyes. . . .

He must not suffer,
And shed on me the glory of his youth,
If afterward. . . . O crystal Moon, that showest
All ages in thy turning magic stone,
Let me not on thy ominous glass behold him
Waking to disillusion.

All my moments
Are to his pleasure, and I build this Anet
His home, I draw the hunt around its walls,
And round its fires carve crescent moons and
quivers,

Set in my trees the trailing herons, cage
 The leopard in my halls ; on terraces
 Broider my peaches blowing posied flowers,
 Or on my tables stand Cellini's bowls
 And Palissy's illumined vases—all
 To bind his senses to his passionate heart,
 Submissive to one joy. . . .

A distant shouting !

A roundelay of shouts ! . . . It was so silent
 I heard the woodmouse creep.

Again ! More clear

The roundelays of shouts ! [She listens.

VOICES.

Vive, vive le Roi !

DIANE. The little, creeping feet . . . then *Vive le Roi !*

And horses' hoofs scattering their noise abroad.
 King François dead ? *Le Roi est mort !*

And Henri

Careering to a throne ? [She sits down.

Years fall on me . . .

[She passes her hand over her forehead as
if stunned.

Another woman now
 Is Henri's Queen, to-night is Queen of France ;
 And other women of resplendent youth
 Proclaim in their fresh bosoms their young King.
 Another is his Queen and will be crowned
 His Queen ! The little Médicis, his Queen !
 O Child of Jove, my Sponsor, shall she rule ?
 O Sister of the gods, shall this thing be ?

Anet, O Anet,
Thy costly buildings vain, as vain as dross
The courtways, balustrades and gleaming treasure
Of Limosin, Cellini, Palissy,
Vain—if a Queen and of immortal stamp
Rule not among them. In this magic castle,
Among the woods, Diane must be established,
And cried the Queen of any Queens alive,
Till the years yield, and the laws yield, and
even
The ceremonies in old Saint-Denis
Are empty rites beside her coronation.

[*Listening.*

Footsteps this way—steps of a messenger?
No, my fantastic sculptor paces night
Alone, or as if handfast with the moon.

Maître Jean !

[*GOUJON pauses.*

GOUJON. Your servant !

DIANE (*advancing*). Maître Jean, are there not
dreams that exile Time ?

GOUJON. Dreams, Madam, exile Time from any
future,

And only guard him in his Golden Age
When he was young ; for dreams are memories
Alive, as tyrannies of happy gods
Over all change.

DIANE. Maître Jean, you must forsake
Your doors, your mantels—art of masonry !
And do a finer miracle : present me
In sculpture as a Dream,

A troubling Dream that shall for ever hold
The moved heart of a Dream ; such talisman
As in a little lake kept Charlemagne gazing
Whole-eyed before it while the day went
on.

Maître Jean, my years are many—mould a
dream !

This house is sad—

The many years rule over it—depose them !

Let the one vision, let the talisman

Govern the coming in, the going out

Of sovereign love. *[He lifts his cap.]*

GOUJON. Madam, a sculpture, is it ?

The goddess set in trees ?

DIANE. Dian, my angel,

My sponsor—

GOUJON. At the font ? I have the dream,

Not for dull trees to shadow, for the moon

To heave a ghostlike pall on. . . . Would such
vision

Be talisman to rule a house of youth,

To trouble Love's imagination, quickest

Of faculties ? No, no ! I carve a fountain,

And you shall listen to the untired waters,

Smile from your couch at their untired abund-
ance. . . .

Think, how the streams abound here ! Powerful
youth

Is in them as a legend. From their waves

I will evoke the genius of the place,

A woman, clear and fresh, a huntress-fairy
Clasping a royal stag, pillowed on bulk
Of a huge hound, and, in repose from hunting,
Attentive to the brightness of the waters,
To their eternal movement, to the glances
Of sun on them and lovely moon by night.
So you shall dream and be yourself the Dream.

DIANE. Maître, I will be a fountain.

GOUJON. And a goddess !

But, Madam, for the royal love a woman,
Not the inexorable lunar beauty,
A goddess and yourself : the shapely head
Adorned with France's rarest gems, a bracelet
To start the mind back to the gracious woman
As only vesture of mortality.
A gallant, troubling spell ! Ah, Madam, noble,
Amusing and eternal.

DIANE. At my font,

Baptized with the cold streams that feed my
bath,

As an old witch in childhood counselled me ;
The captive stag, those jewels and my beauty
Resolute in its youth. . . . Amusing, noble !
Maître Jean, against the stag
I shall let dangle a few gathered blossoms—
You see how I am dreaming with your dream—
Thus, from my hand . . . King François died last
night !

The Dauphin Henri is your King.

GOUJON (*kneeling*).

Our Queen.

The STEWARD enters

STEWARD. Madame la Sénéchale,
His Majesty King Henri—for such title
To-night is his—bade me of his royal love
To tell you of his sovereignty, and pray you
That you will start to-morrow for Saint-Germain.

[The STEWARD bows and withdraws.]

DIANE. Maître Jean, our secret !

Keep your knees one breathing
Of these white forests. . . .

We can hear the streams.

ACT II

SCENE I

Twelve years later

Paris. Les Tourelles. A gallery. FRANÇOIS DUC
DE GUISE *and the Connétable* ANNE DE MONT-
MORENCY.

GUISE. You have been vanquished and undone
by her
Who is the Catholic, all-swaying Power
That France must move to.

MONTMORENCY.

Ay.

GUISE. The Catholic,
High Power that bound our throne in solemn pact
With Spain, when I drove back beyond Saint-
Quentin
Its Paris-aiming chivalry in rout.
It was Diane, remember, who at Cateau-
Cambrésis made a peace for all the world :
It is Diane who, of herself, has taught
Her King to reign, converting into prudence
The slowness of his nature, and his gloom
Converting into dignity, inspiring

His faults to seek their virtues, and his silence
To seek its speech, as the rock-muffled river
Vaults from its source to all the praise of men.

MONTMORENCY. Ay so !

GUISE. She is the Catholic,
Supreme Power that has sanctified a league
Between our Christian King and Rome, between
Our crown and the tiara. Could you dream
That any fancy of a day or days
Could scare from the King's vision that white
Eagle
Of his dominion ? Fie ! Your King and your
young Beauty
You bedded them. . . . Well, fie !

MONTMORENCY. Seeing this Dian ride her moon and
gather
The reins of all the elements and forces
Men, counsellors, their sovereign's friends, should
sway,

Prevailing, I was jealous ; and, when April
Drew the King heavy-browed among the hawthorn
And spangle of the time, proclivity
Was urged with sight of a regaling Eve.
Ah, well, he tasted Spring awhile—oh, heigh,
It passes with the shedding of the Spring.
My rival keeps her slave upon our throne :
Well, well ! I, at Ecouen,
Before my door, have slaves worth any homage—
The envied twain
Of Michel-Ange. I shall retire awhile

To my Ecouen. Wholly it surpasses
Her Anet—its erection and its treasure—
Through critic grip of my obtainment, richer
Than she by avarice can impropiate.
The King !

GUISE. His step and eyes toward you. Repent !
[Exit GUISE hurriedly.

Enter KING HENRI

HENRI. Is she removed ? . . . Assure me !

MONTMORENCY.

Sire,

The Lady Fleming is removed.

HENRI.

Connétable,

O my dear traitor-friend, I am absolved,
Forgiven !—above me all my cloud of sins
Turned by the Moon and her smile's shepherd-
ing

To snowy tendance round her amplitude,
Garde royale of her bounty. O wide pleasure,
For which to sin is almost recompense,
As spots float into graces ! I have pleaded,
Montmorency, for you.

She must forgive you . . . but she will not hear
Even my confession : she will only speak,
Dieu, of our love, herself grown beautiful
As if to speak its glory. O divine !
I pleaded for my friend—
She will not hear your name.

MONTMORENCY.

Nor do I kneel

For Madam's absolution. Gracious sire,
I have not sought it.

HENRI. But my love for you—
Her great indulgence !

MONTMORENCY. You are trembling, Sire ;
I have no dread of Madam.

HENRI. Fool !

MONTMORENCY. But for your sake . . .

HENRI. One day, and soon, your hand
Touched by her clement hand, shall make
accord ;

I can be happy then—at peace.

MONTMORENCY. Nay, Sire,
The little Scottish woman was complaisant
Of white and rose and kissing breath as any
The floweriest orchard-tree on the sun's side.

HENRI. Peace, peace ! My Princess—I would think
of her !

Montmorency, you must be friends, as soon
As she will hear your name.

And listen, friend ;
You shall assist a festival of joy,
I have dreamed forth already. When to-night
The moon emerges, I and my little Dauphin,
The king and heir of France, will ride together
In robes of silk, mystic with every blue
And sheen and orient of the lovely moon ;
Our followers armoured as in opal shells
Plated for Neptune's wars : we shall ride round
The Rue Saint-Antoine, where we hold the jousts,

And dance like Centaurs, we on our white horses,
To eastern music, such
As yields the moon her moonlight back—such
music

As in its passion quits the nightingale
To rise of its own voice where groves are exiled
And day can boast a throat. O such a music
As comes from old religion of old Mages,
From incense of white, Indian incense-flowers.
We shall ride out from Les Tourelles, and you,
With half the riding-company I lead,
From the Hôtel Montmorency.

[Arresting Montmorency from speech.

Consider!

The moon! The eastern music!

Think, as Centaurs
To ride, yet move in harmony, yet dance
For one so heavenly. The cavalcade,
The curvets, circlings and the caprioles,
The feat on feat of crowning horsemanship!
And stars, we must have stars—
Hundreds of torches . . . for the stars are
watchers
How night performs her miracles.

The DAUPHINE MARIE STUART enters

What, Marie,
Drooping along the gallery, no Dauphin
Lurking about you with his secrets, child?

MARIE (*running up to him*). Where is my Gouvernante? No one has seen her!

Where is my Lady Fleming?

MONTMORENCY (*pinching her cheek*). Fie, fie, bonnie Scotland!

Fie, fie!

HENRI. Will you not be a Queen? Then, little Marie,

You will see many come and go : consider
Only how you remain. You shall continue
Your studies with the princes, and henceforth
Rest, where I love to see you, in the arms
Of the great Lady Sénéchale. Consider
How she effects the king in your young prince!
She can effect in any prince a king;
In any princess at her charge a queen.

[*He kisses her forehead.*]

Come, Marie, for our Ronsard waits my coming—
'Apollo of the Muses.' Gracious words
Of your young adoration!

(*To MONTMORENCY.*) Friend, to-night
Our moonstruck chivalry—to dance, to dance
In clouded film of dazzlement and joy!

'Aux rais connus de la Lune
Assemblez sous la nuit brune!'

Come to our poet! Queenlet Marie, come!

SCENE II

Paris. A bedroom at Saint-Germain

CATHERINE DE MÉDICIS, *recovering from childbed, is seated by a great hearth, sunk in a velvet chair. Near her is the cradle of her third son HENRI. Two pale children, FRANÇOIS and CHARLES, come in and out from time to time. The old nurse, ANGELA DE FLORENCE, is on her knees at the side of the hearth opposite to CATHERINE'S chair : she holds her eye against a hole in the floor.*

CATHERINE. The boys are in the passage with the dog ;

You hear him yap and yawn as Carlo scolds . . .
To you—ah, Angela—to you my children
Have been Italian.

Is not this our moment ? . . .

Babe, you are sealed away and safe. . . .

Bambino !

Angela, O my jewel,
My eye of light, reflect, O magic crystal,
Not what shall be, what is.

Are they together ?

ANGELA. Madonna says the truth, they are together.

CATHERINE. Can you see, Angela—in flagrant deed ?

ANGELA. A fire . . . and the King kneels. I cannot reach

Above her bosom, for her head is tilted
Beyond my peep-hole ; but the hearthside fire
Is rose-red on his hand that covers hers.

CATHERINE. Begging for deed, or is it gratitude ?

Ha, ha ! A queen and goddess in the heavens,
My Jove ! And peacocks that have eyes, my
Jove !

And Juno born again,

At Florence, of the patient Médicis. . . .

Angela, I turn faint. My camphire-flask !

No, no ! Re-set your jewel,

Nor loose it from its socket if I die.

Are the boys running hither ? Carlo buffets

The dog or pulls his coat out, while Francesco

Protests his brother cruel. . . . Hear his voice,

As little as a *viola de gamba's* !

What do you see ?

ANGELA. The hand rose-red on hers.

CATHERINE. Have not the fingers tightened, Angela ?

ANGELA. No, Madonna ! They are laid as before :
they are not clasping : so I have seen my own
father, sitting under the grapes of his door,
when it was dusk—'las, in the old days—hide
my mother's hand with his. (*Lifting herself.*)
How my eye waters and aches, Holy Virgin !
This eye of mine should be twice as big as the
other, and little wires twang in the ball. . . .
Dear Saints ! She is swooning. . . . Poor little
head, poor little paleness, drooped, drooped !
Frail mother of fragile children, her births al-

most deaths. La, la, la! But with each she is stronger, birth by birth, child by child—her taint of death is drawn away by their new flesh—and each is pale as my apron and weak as an old chair in the damp. . . . La, la, la! Smell the camphire—*Ecco!* We see light again! We revive!

CATHERINE. A grey, old woman,
Grey as a nun. . . .

(*Laughing.*) In Greece there were Grey Women
Who had one eye among them. . . .

Miserable,
You are not looking. Clap your eye to—look!
ANGELA. I only see the rose-red hand again.

CATHERINE. And laid flat in the firelight?

Basta, basta!

Lift up your head!—The children!

Enter FRANÇOIS and CHARLES

FRANÇOIS. Mother dear,
Charles is so cruel; he has wrenched a tuft
Of Lolo's hair.

CATHERINE. The creature has not bitten?
Carlo, your finger? Go to Angela.

ANGELA. Nothing, *carissimo*, nothing. Come with me. . . . I will put on Madonna Valentina's *Euphorbium* ointment. Come, Carlo. . . . Frightened at a bite! You should not play with wicked dogs.

CATHERINE. Give him some *aqua vitæ*: he is shaken.

The beast shall be destroyed.

FRANÇOIS. But Carlo hurt her;

The blood sprang in her coat.

CATHERINE (*to ANGELA*). Send out a page to drown her.

CHARLES. They love me, how they love me, all the dogs!

And I love them—to put them in the river.

CATHERINE. You with your cold! Go in to Angela.

[*Exit the NURSE with CHARLES.*]

FRANÇOIS (*kneeling and laying his head against her knee*). Lolo is mine—

Let her be sent away where Charles can never

Creep up to her and hug her and then hurt.

He follows like a shadow, croons above her,

Then all at once her yell screams out. *O maman,*

Send her away—but do not kill my Lolo,

Ma Petite! Maman, maman,

Send her away . . .

My Marie loves her dearly.

CATHERINE. Marie Stuart

Must weep your snapping cur. Now do not cry . . .

You will awake your brother.

Pish, pish, François,

Go in to Angela and stay within:

But tell her I await her. Go! [*Exit FRANÇOIS.*]

(*She looks at her hands.*) . . . I fatten!

I shall live on ; I shall have age.
And some day that proud woman, there below,
His hand is on, will feel the hand of death
Inevitable. *La Vieille*—
That is her name, when courtiers meet and
 laugh.
One day she will be taken by the years—
The twenty years between her and the King—
Forth to her sepulchre, and I alive,
If Fate confirm my youth ; for I am waxing
In flesh ; I shall live on—I shall have age.

Re-enter ANGELA

Quick, quick ! your senses mine at loophole—
 seeing
And hearing, mine ! Peep through, then lay
 your ear
Flat on the floor.

ANGELA. They have not stirred, Madonna.

CATHERINE. Not ! *Dio mio*, how they love ! . . .
Now listen !

ANGELA (*alternately peeping and listening*). He murmurs how he has loved their child—how he loves Madonna Diane de France. . . . Yes—La Valentina has moved her hand from under his. . . . And he says that while your children are princes her daughter is unacknowledged. . . . She has risen . . . and he says he will suffer it no more. . . . I see Madonna Valentina now :

they have risen ; she carries a high head. . . .
He says he will acknowledge his daughter.

CATHERINE. Henri, my little son, my cradle-babe !
Henri !

ANGELA. He says this act is the witness of his heart,
that he has no fatherhood till a child of his love
is a princess. . . . Madonna Valentina stands
loftily, as if her feet were on stone, as a statue's.
. . . He says there shall be no pause in the
vehemence with which that blessed writing of
his pride as a father shall be prepared, and with
it titles, honour. . . . She stretches out her arms,
as women do when soldiers break into the
house.

CATHERINE. But she is silent ? Grovel, Angela !
Your ear, your ear !

ANGELA. His voice—the warm, beelike drone of his
voice : joy, fatherhood, his living flower ! Now,
now it stops—her voice !—Let me see ! She
has pushed him on the chest with her hands ;
he is out of my sight. . . . Let me hear ! She
says, ‘ I have belonged to you because I love
you.’

CATHERINE. Ah !

ANGELA. And she says no decree of his Parliament
shall ever make her his concubine. . . . ‘ I will
not suffer it.’ But is she gone ? I hear his feet
about the chamber. A sob ? No ! Is it a
moan ? No, no—something other, not of that
kind ; I have heard such cry out of doors. It

is in the room with the fire where he was. And Madonna la Duchessa is gone away.

CATHERINE. She acts, O cunning Wanton, as her Normans

Bargain about their pippins—‘ Leave them, leave them !

Who wants to sell ? ’

The King ? But is he sighing
Or humming purblind as a heavy bee
Black at the honey ? Is he still below ?

ANGELA. There is a sigh . . . he is still pacing. He whistles. He cannot tell what he should think . . . he raps his knuckles on the table and his rings chime out. Madonna, he has unbolted the little door of your staircase. I believe he is coming up . . . [*She rises from the ground.*

CATHERINE. My Jove ascending, tired of vagrancy,
His mistress fled away ? Is this kind father
Coming to grudge the princedom of his heirs ?
The queenship of his wife ?

I cannot raise me . . .
My place is by my Henri’s cradle. Trim it !

Nurse, wimple the white round my hair, and waken
The baby that it cry up from the ground.

Call Carlo and Francesco . . . set them by
me,

For in these pledges

Of royalty the bankers of the Arno

Do homage to the Queen they bred for France.

Princes of France ! . . . Call Charles

And call the Dauphin François. [*Exit ANGELA.*
Ha, ha, ha !

To peep from the same hole at the same treason
Year after year, to play divinity
Over the criminals of many a sin,
To clasp their secrets and be tolerant
As Time is, and as Fate, and as Great God
Himself . . .

Enter KING HENRI

Sire, you confound me ! In the twilight
I never had a visit from your Highness.
The hour is unprepared, or we had shown you
Less of forlornness ; we had lighted lights,
And slipped the ermine round us. You surprise
What we had gladly screened of our estate.

HENRI. You have been languid—
They told me.

CATHERINE. Henri. . . . I am stronger now . . .
Henri is feeble—ah, so feeble still,
He cries—you hear him—like an orphaned lamb.

HENRI. Monsieur le Docteur—
These chambers are his very pharmacy—
What does he promise ?

CATHERINE. Sire, he promises
When the harsh winds decline . . .
Can you not touch
Your flesh and blood ?

HENRI. Madam, where are your sons
François and Charles ?

CATHERINE. They are sent for, Majesty.

Why did you visit me, so like a spectre
At eve? And all my fire gone down to dust,
Forgotten on the stones . . .

Come, Angela,
Bring in the Princes.

[*The NURSE enters with the boys.*

We have lost the fire,
Talking together. Kindle it! My Dauphin,
Salute your father; Charles, salute your father.

[*They kneel. The KING gives them each a
hand indifferently.*

HENRI. A spectre do I come? Alas, you call
me

These little spectres in—

(*Between his teeth.*) A Vampire litter!

This boy—how hollow-chested? What is ailing?

CATHERINE. Charles was dog-bitten. Nurse, you
have applied

Madame de Valentinois'

Most rare *Euphorbium* ointment? Did you
pour him

The *aqua vitæ*? He is mortal pale.

ANGELA. Ay, till *carissimo* was choked, Madonna.

HENRI. Take him to bed!

Always Italian here and always ailments!

Charles, have you given

Your verses in the flower-of-lily book

To the Maître Ronsard?

CHARLES.

No, Sire.

HENRI. I will give them.
He has perused my verses, our great Master,
Our Oriole of the fountain and fresh grove.
Send me your tutor with the little book.
Now hide your cold a-bed.

Ah, Monsieur Dauphin,
What is your ailment, that you bind your fore-
head,
Chéri, with hand and fingers ?

CATHERINE. He has cruel,
Most thrilling pain. Shut your left ear—*Mon*
enfant,
Is it your father ?—No, he does not answer ;
He cannot hear me. Put the hand away.
Monsieur le Docteur says a cold has struck
him
Too inwardly.

HENRI (*with eagerness*). Come with me to la
Duchesse,
And let us ask her help. Madame la Duchesse,
Knows of kind herbs, is wise in powders rare,
Made from Licornus. O my little spectre,
She can enweave into her remedy
A dead man's hair ! Come, she will ease this
aching.
And, Madame, you are languid—by-and-by
She shall prescribe a quick restorative ;
Yea, and appoint you better tendance, Madam,
Not ashes on the hearth, nor a poor cradle-child
Puling for milk.

CATHERINE. Your little Catherina. . . .

A kiss. . . . You are so careful of my health.

*[She fawns on his velvet cloak. He lets a
caress fall on her brow.]*

Your little Catherina. . . . *Non, ta Catherine.*

HENRI. Your Dauphin shall be rendered back to
you

And swiftly by his tutor. François, come !

She has the mysteries of life ? Your hand !

[Exit with the boy.]

CATHERINE (*closing her eyes*). How beautiful !

Gallant and stately, King and Paladin,

Snow on his forehead ! Even his youthful
hair

Worships her into greyness, and his eyes

Have turned from dull and twilight into dark

With vivid stars to wait on her.

Re-enter ANGELA

He climbed

My tower to find excuse for new approach

To her. . . . My child, my eldest-born, my son,

My King-to-be shall link them in again

After their quarrel. . . . I have cunning wit—

Ah, and my Paladin, a soul so simple,

He lays himself before my wit as naked

As he was born.

My child shall link them in !

He calls our children phantoms. By-and-by

His mistress will lift up to me her drugs,

Her powder of the fat of unicorn ;
And I, a Médicis, a Florentine,
Dare drink the potion. . . . She would have me
live,
And breed my phantom-children ; as a friend
She will arrange my house ; but never part
us,
Angela, my own eye and my own ear,
Never—for all her dominance !

I tarry . . .

I thrive—for I am spreading round the chin
A ripple of more chin,
That spreads a circle of deep augury.
You find me fatter, though by childbed wearied
And faint, do you not, Nurse ? I shall have
age !
And I have hatred, soft,
Ah, it is soft as worms that hunger on
In graves they will disburthen by-and-by :
So soft, so blind, so constant—hate !

ANGELA.

Madonna,

La Valentina and Carissimo.

Enter DIANE with FRANÇOIS

DIANE. The King reports you languid, *Mignonne*—
Ah,

What heat beneath these braids !
Let me shed on your forehead a clear shower,
As if an April shower—and from this cloud . . .
But you would hold the phial ? As you will !

Now waft my Spanish fan . . .

'Tis breeze and shower

Together that re-animate . . .

CATHERINE. Where is the King ?

DIANE. The King ? He left me for the Racquet Court.

CATHERINE. They tell me, Madam, there

All note his errors, as he were not King,

Speak his mistakes or put him in the wrong.

DIANE. Why not ? He loves the game.

CATHERINE (*as if talking in her sleep*). All note his errors,

And watch, and sometimes put him in the wrong.

DIANE. I leave my Spanish fan. . . .

Nurse, come within.

This child is ill with fever.

CATHERINE. Tell the King . . .

DIANE. I shall not see him, *Mignonne*. Any message

Will find him in the Racquet Court. . . .

CATHERINE. By magic

Can you work spells, emptying your physic jars,

To ease the Dauphin ?

DIANE. Then you are eased, *ma chère* ?

We must foment this ailing little head.

Come, nurse—where is your readiness ? Neglect

All round the Queen ! Take heed

Or you will lose your honourable place.

CATHERINE (*starting up*). Never ! She is of many years beloved.

We do not part.

DIANE. Softly ! We would not fret you.
And if she serves you well . . .

CATHERINE. She serves me well.

What were a leaping fire upon the hearth
To a kind tongue that stories the blank hours ?
What were a lamp in twilight to an eye
That sees with us our far-off land, that sees
With us the basking lizards on the stones
Of the Bargello or the Vatican ?
She serves me as I need . . .

Take back your fan,
Madam, it has made air enough.

DIANE. *Mon François.*

Fetch me my fan, and come, *pauvre petit*, come.

[*They go out with ANGELA.*]

CATHERINE. Her cheeks are hot and lines upon her temples.

She sprayed me fresh ! . . . O rainbow of my scutcheon,

Come to me from her shower ! Henri—ah,
Henri—

To-night he will be lonesome on his bed,
Because he is in quarrel with his Moon,
His scorched Moon. . . . Ah, to-night
He will lie scorched and desolate above
His keys of office . . . but no starry usher
Will give him entrance to his Dian's grace—

Locked ! He will sleep in bane ! He is defeated,
And I avenged—no royal child I bore him
Could link the paramours. He is defeated !
I bless his scorched Moon. He will sleep in bane.

SCENE III

The forest of Evereux, by Anet, at crossways—one road leading to a hermitage, where a red light burns, the other to deeper forest in snow. DIANE, under a cloak and veil, turns back to a MESSENGER, who stands below her, panting.

DIANE. I cannot see the King, I may not see him ;
It is forbidden me, amid these snows,
And sharpest cold. I cannot see the King.

MESSENGER. Madam . . .

DIANE. I left command
Before I started for the little chapel
Beyond there in the snows. I must go forth
Through the winter to my shrift.

Dismiss the King.

MESSENGER. And shall I say ? . . .

DIANE. I keep my solitude.

[Exit MESSENGER. She makes a few steps upward, then leans against a bare Spanish chestnut, breathing heavily.]

Anet ! It is itself a sepulchre ;
Its chapel guards my husband's memory.
Here I am honourable, here

A dedicated widow . . . for De Brézé
Haunts not ; his ghost is laid.

Enter through snowy briars DIANE DE FRANCE.
She bows, almost prostrating herself before
LA SÉNÉCHALE.

You startled me !

What are you, child, and whence ?

DIANE DE FRANCE. I am from the King.

DIANE. And with what suit ?

DIANE DE FRANCE. The King

Stooped down and kissed my forehead ; he complained

To find me distant from you ; for he said

He had given me to you, and so fair a gift

Must needs be cherished. Madam, he was gentle ;

And while he waited in my cabinet

I strove to entertain him duteously.

Gentle !—but when you so repulsed him, Madam,

He bade me to your presence as I was,

Muttering in harshest tones he would not take

Refusal of your lips save from my lips.

DIANE. Then from your lips refusal, and retire,

Your errand done, to study of your books.

DIANE DE FRANCE. Madam, it is a fête.

DIANE. Entreat the King

To go with you a-hunting—his indulgence,

Or my command. Do not return to me

[*Exit* DIANE DE FRANCE.]

There are two children sleeping in my tomb :
Would that my children were all sleeping there !
This mortal issue is not of a strength
To blazen me his goddess. Dian breeds
No progeny. . . . Endymion alone,
That boy, hid shining in a cave, attests
Her reckoning with the mortal hours, her fond-
ness,

And all that she would leave of trace on earth.
Henri ! But he shall suffer the extreme
Of love's humiliation till he raise me
Supreme in honour to the world. His Queen,
And at my pleasure and when I decree,
A slave, has borne him children ; at my plea-
sure. . . .

Colder and colder—I will grow more cold !
Henri ! If I have fought for you with Time
Till he has wondered at me and stood by ;
If I have made a spring for you where fiercely
Winter was at his ravening underground—
Shall I not guard for you your Dream intact,
Something most steadfast, lighting you before ?
Henri ! But you must suffer thousand pains
If I can keep this Vision, clear and deathless
And never-wavering, in your faith. . . . Beloved,
I am old and weary : one of us must die.

*[She stands for a while mute, her eyes on
the snow. Rousing herself.]*

But I must leave him for this winter journey—
Leave him . . . and offer penance for my dear,

Inevitable sinning, while he fondles
That younger Diane . . .

[Suddenly HENRI springs up the forest, now dusk. He carries a torch that throws its red light on her face.]

(In a half-raised voice.) I take rest . . .

Go back !

HENRI. Diane, this torture, all this rank dismissal,
Your eyes grown spiked and ruddy as the stars :
I cannot find my fault.

You will not speak
More than the fatal winds ; you are as dumb
As the jailer who conveyed me fort to fort :
I did not heed if I were borne to death,
Not then, nor now. . . . Diane, you will not
speak ?

You cannot ?—Something I have done
You will not look upon ? The offence must be
Airy and in conception . . . as to tread
Rashly on hallowed pavements . . . for in
knowledge
I cannot sin.

You treat me
As I had offered to you in my speech
Insult so gross you are cut off from speech.
Or do you dare in jealousy to doubt
I honour you completely, without rival ?
Diane, if I have lacked
In honour to you—as through sleepless nights
Sometimes I have accused myself, no more

You shall accuse.

My fault ?

As hawk in anchored flight I ride the air
To fall on any guilt or speck of error
Toward you, my one and only Princess.

DIANE.

Sire,

You have offended the Uranian Love
We read of in our Plato, in the book
Tri-spotted with our fleurs-de-lis, between
The strait embrace of our name-letters. Henri,
It was as when the East thrusts on the South
Its closure of dark clouds, when on my ear,
Open to heaven in your voice, there gathered
Discourse of proclamation and of law ;
An edict of your parliament.

Henri.

I could not

Think that your high aloofness drew from that.
I would have honoured you in the clear day :
The Dian born of us is given to night.

DIANE. There she belongs—our secret, beautiful

By nature and by nurture : there she ends,
In quiet of the majesty of night.

I who was made to give you heirs, of you
To rear up children of a royal race,
Because I love you, Henri, am your Mistress ;
And this dear name you have brought very
low,

Proclaiming it, rejecting it. I am
Your Mistress ; but no favours of my love,
Till you have so exalted this dear name,

It is breathed low throughout all Christendom.
Shall law and equity, at your appeal,
Blazen me forth your concubine? It haunts!
So Lucifer made hell for God—a creature
Of His immortal essence fallen, grown false.

HENRI. Diane, you rouse me! Such contamination
Was never of my thoughts. I would atone . . .

DIANE. Peace, peace—atone! Love's Worshipper
atone!

Oh, we are fallen indeed, a man and woman
Beneath the Curse,—no more beneath our Dream.
You make us sinners, Henri. . . . Then, atone!
Before the altar of our God, before
Yon little altar-shrine, apostate-love,
Vow me in expiation many a pile
Blazing round those who disallow their God.
So in the fuel heaped for burning, so
By holocaust, by sacrifice, offences
Your weakness lays on us as cardinal,
Shall sink to venial through the cleansing fire.
Light me the flames!

The Universe shall see your expiation,
The heretics shall tremble and the Church
Be re-exalted in this Huguenot
And doubting France . . .

Light me the flames, light up the Universe!
So Love, the terrible, Uranian Love
Shall glow forgiveness on you. My dimmed lover,
Promise me holy pyres to cleanse this sin,
This heresy, this brutish ignorance!—

That I to you could be your concubine,
And not the Mistress of Love's Temple Court,
Once and for ever past all circumstance.
Your oath !

HENRI. My oath !

I will condemn the heretics to anguish
That burns as mine.

Diane, but I was dull
In my impiety ! What desecration !
You lead me to the bridge-way from whose
key

The gulf of Hades can be measured out—

I will light fires !

But how atone to you ? I know not how !

This fiery cleansing of my realm for God

Of treason and apostasy . . . I know not ! . . .

The fires will blaze His glory, as the morning

Or evening blaze the glory of the Sun :

But you ?

If I were hoist on some Himalyan spire

To offer incense to the utmost stars—

Vain would it be, vain as to touch with homage,

That breathes up through the firmament, your
glory,

Assured against Death, against Time assured.

You ask an oath : with loyalty more firm

Than ever hath been sworn to a new Prince

I yield you my obedience ; and my torch

Pledges its element to your command.

But something I must do of my own self

This breath of forests !

So the world shall breathe,
And Christendom breathe low, and time to come.

[They are lost behind the bare Spanish chestnuts.]

SCENE IV

Paris. Les Tourelles. MADAME DIANE'S apartment, steps at the back leading down into her private chapel. To the right a bed of white satin ; to the left a window filled with red light that dyes the bed. Her WOMEN, the DEMOISELLES CASSANDRE, ASTRÉE, HÉLÈNE and HÉLOÏSE, are laying silken sheets on the bed and laying out a dressing-robe of cloth of silver.

CASSANDRE. Her hunting done, tissue of cloud
awaits her,

The sylvan turned celestial . . . but to-day,

See, the moon-chamber blushing fierily—

See, the struck glow !

ASTRÉE. 'Las, I have some compassion ;
You none, Cassandre. Is not a man, poor devil,
Ruled on those flames straight as a line ?

They tell me

The heretics go naked to their ash,

However clothed for tying to the stake.

Think of the poor *Couturier*—and no clothes !

A foolish, mincing, modest fellow once !

HÉLÈNE. A Huguenot—a fellow

So modest he could scarcely find the face
To speak those words that clothe a gallant.

ASTRÉE. Zut !

Words do not clothe.

HÉLÈNE. Not a *Couturier's* words ?

Without them stitchery were spider-labour.

And how were gallants clothed ?

CASSANDRE. I would be there !

ASTRÉE. Poor devil ! 'Las !

Not even a thread to join the tindered rents !

'Las, I have pity—'las !

CASSANDRE. I, none ! Our King has none. Close
to those flames,

That glow the bed, he waits to see the losel

Burn into dust.

HÉLOÏSE. Not for religion's sake.

ASTRÉE. But for our Mistress' sake, and for her cause.

CASSANDRE. Think of the infamy, the jibe ! A
preacher

To swear she had infected France, to roar—

When she made mention of a Catholic,

And ever-living doctrine of her faith—

'Mix not your ordure with God's Sacred
Things.'

Those were his words.

ASTRÉE. Ordure ! [*They all laugh.*]

CASSANDRE. A stable-groom

Had hardly tongued the word this Huguenot

On his rank breath flung at Our Sovereign-Duchess,

And flung before the flashed eyes of the King !

HÉLÈNE. I would be there to see the King—

His eyes, his white plumes sharp on his white
hair,

Such hair of April snow,

And his white feathers like the milkier blossoms

Dangling and laughing at the snow! Our

King

Adorable! His Paris loves him well,

His Court and all the ladies of his Court . . .

He lifts you a dropped fan——

ASTRÉE.

Your own is broken.

How often have you let it fall, *ma chère*?

HÉLÈNE. And I am told he was a boy so awkward

A lady's trinket falling at his feet

Appalled him as a spectre.

ASTRÉE.

La Vieille

Has wrought him debonair and unembarrassed.

And how his laugh is soft—a little brisker

With us and Marie Stuart and his children

Than with our Mistress!

[ASTRÉE turns to the book.

I am curious. . . .

Girls, *La Vieille* is busy with her Plato.

See, the King's portrait stamped upon the boards

In gold upon the brown. . . . See this!

[*A poem in the KING's handwriting slips from the book. The DEMOISELLES gather round, elbowing each the other for a sight of the manuscript.*

HÉLÈNE. A poem of the King's—the adorable,
The last chivalrous King.

CASSANDRE (*laughing and reading*).

Hélas, mon Dieu, combien je regrette

Le temps que j'ai perdu en ma jeunesse.

ASTRÉE. *Combien de fois je me suis souhaité*

Avoir Diane pour ma seule Maîtresse.

HÉLOÏSE. *Mais je craignais qu'elle qui est déesse*

Ne se voulût abaisser jusque-là

De faire cas de moi . . .

DIANE *has entered in hunting-gear, with every sign of weariness and dejection; but a smile breaks over her face as she lays a hand on HÉLOÏSE's shoulder.*

DIANE. Undress me, child . . .

[*The DEMOISELLES in confusion stand round CASSANDRE, who holds the poem.*

Yet stay! This is the bearer
Of a king's letter . . . for my hand.

Present it . . .

Retire!

[*CASSANDRE, HÉLÈNE and ASTRÉE go out.*
(*To HÉLOÏSE.*) Undress me, child.

[*HÉLOÏSE removes her hunting-gear and lays round her the loose silver robe, completely covering her.*

HÉLOÏSE. Full moon, Madame la Duchesse, a full
and argent moon!

DIANE (*searches the face of HÉLOÏSE*). You shall read to me a little, Héroise. Stay, you may read me perhaps to sleep.

[*She takes the face of HÉLOÏSE between her hands.*]

Héroise, is there any that you love ?

[*In terror the girl struggles from her gaze.*]

HÉLOÏSE. Madam is weary ; Madam must not occupy herself with the heart—nothing is so fatiguing. But, if Madam will deign to look in her long mirror, she will see what will delight . . .

DIANE. No, Héroise.

HÉLOÏSE. From the window and reflected again in the mirror, are the flames of the bonfire lighted at noon for Monsieur le Couturier. If Madam would deign to raise herself . . .

[*DIANE leans on her elbow and gazes out.*]

DIANE. So, to purge what is noxious from the air ! . . . So, to make breathing clean ! Héroise, you must never give your heart to a heretic. Rose-red !—I shall not sleep. How the flower dances for me in the mirror !

HÉLOÏSE. I shall give my heart to one who is constant like the King.

DIANE. The King is constant——

HÉLOÏSE. Madam, yes. It makes no difference if Madam is a little slow in her walking—the King will curb himself as proudly as a well-trained charger. It makes no difference if at hunt Madam

cannot fix the animal pursued, nor the stoop of the falcon—no matter! He affects blindness; he is full of sympathy. I shall love a man constant as the King; and then when wrinkled and in years I shall have some one to flatter me with assurance I am beautiful . . .

DIANE. Would you like to be flattered, Héloïse?

HÉLOÏSE. I should like to resemble you in every point. I should like when I am older to be esteemed; I should like to have great power.

DIANE. Should you like to be loved when you are old, little, plain Héloïse?

HÉLOÏSE. I cannot conceive that possible. If now I am plain, I have youth; I am in flower.

Shall I read to Madam?

[She turns over the pages.]

Though the King has grey hair, he is young. It is as if he had chosen a colour to make his eyes more dark. The white hair is absurd and like a masque, but the King's eyes are melancholy and full of the softness of youth.

[DIANE goes up to her reading-stand.]

It is said, Madam, the King has adopted the tint of his hair to match your own—it is said that, though you will not dye your hair, he has made sacrifice instead.

DIANE. O Héloïse, my white skin is mine, and the King's white hair is his own. You do not read

to me ! Finish the long strip of broidered silver
for my cloak.

[HÉLOÏSE *lays a mirror near the bed.*

No, Héloïse, you do not read to me. I think
you will be latest married of all among my maidens.

[*Exit HÉLOÏSE.*

[DIANE *looks out steadily at the flame from
the heretic's fire.*

To ash now—it is flickering down to ash,
Even that fire. . . . Lo, every fire
Fails, and burns down. . . . More fondly
still

He loves me, but his tenderness creeps in,
And damps the flame.

[*She rises and looks in her mirror.*

No goddess, but a woman.
And flushed and full of tears.

CARDINAL LORRAINE *enters : she speaks in
response to his greeting.*

No, Cardinal ;

To-day I am with Hecate and the tombs—
Most dusk !

CARDINAL. With prouder head,
With lovelier bloom upon your cheek, your quiver
Disordered on the bed. Who has offended ?
And who must fall ?

DIANE (*deeply sighing*). . . . Now when we walk
together

Mine is the heavier tread : he gives me books

Dim to my eyes ; I lay them down
In the little coffer of his gift—for once
My Henri bade me read to him a *chanson*
Of Ronsard, and I could not see ; the page
Was as a dungeon-wall against my eyes.
My gentle Henri ! I have learned the *chanson*
By heart, but the King does not ask for it . . .
The dew falls not as then when he besought
His pleasure in my voice. I failed him ; now
I shall more often fail.

[*She lays herself back on her bed.*]

CARDINAL. Not if his pleasure be the voice and not
While he can break such sighs.

DIANE. He will be constant,
And tender, and fatigue me. Marie Stuart
Will play about the rooms, play as a child,
And pick me up my kerchief or my missal
Caressingly, with long, caressing eyes
Loitering on Henri.

[*With a movement of weariness* DIANE
closes her eyes.]

CARDINAL. *Bien !*

Marie is very noble, very simple ;
The Court is hers—
The Dauphin's Court ; and if you disenchant . . .
Is there a bird flown in ? The air is limpid !
What is it ? She is fallen fast asleep.
The sculpture, the serenity, the bloom
Of marble in its whiteness and its rose !
How shall I rally her ? She has no age,

Save this infirmity of sleep—
 The senses disobedient to the wit !
 Diane ! The King more madly dotes on her,
 Or, shall I rather say, lingers more fond
 Before the fountain where he finds her goddess,
 Or the great portrait where he finds her fair.
Dieu Sauveur ! He is mad to pass her by
 For statue or for image of herself.
 She can pace, even as the Church, this woman,
 A sovereign power : her fame should fill the
 world :
 And it will dwindle down a little cloud,
 Till it become a little cloud and pass.
 How shall I aid her ? To my breviary,
 No vantage taken of the moment's slackness !
 Saint Horace ! You have here the phrase for
 her—

[*He draws from a fold of his robe a volume
 of Horace's Odes.*

(*Murmuring.*) *Diva triiformis* . . . though in years,
 By count of time and season, she is mortal
 And aged as Lyce, when the poet jibed—
 (*Reading.*) *Nec Coae referunt jam tibi purpuræ
 Nec cari lapides tempora, quæ semel
 Notis condita fastis
 Inclusit volucris dies.*

And yet and yet. . . . Infernal sorcery !

[*She opens her eyes and smiles.*

DIANE. A little, healing sleep . . . your judgment,
 Paris ?

CARDINAL. Incomparable Wisdom !

DIANE.

Ay, to-day

My beauty is profound, I have no rival :

Nothing beneath the sun is of this texture.

[She lays her bare arm across her quiver.]

CARDINAL. My creed !

DIANE.

I cannot die !

I shall pass on into a perfect age.

O Cardinal, and I so love my life—

In this I have the goddess, I could count

The centuries as days ; I could become

More beautiful, more golden, softer far,

And slip into the goddess, unperceived

As Daphne to her laurel-tree.

CARDINAL.

My creed !

DIANE (*laying her hand on the CARDINAL'S*).

Yet am I restless as King François grew

In his last sickness. . . . You remember it !

How of a sudden Fontainebleau displeased him,

As all her woods were grey, and he would speed

On to Saint Germain, to La Muette—on

To Demprière, to Loche : then at Rambouillet,

When the end came, as still within the forest,

He startled, quickening to those magic sounds

That the winds strike. . . . It was held fast

By them of saner judgment he was searched

And haunted by that stag that is appointed

Sometimes to lure and maze men to their death.

Whom should it beckon ? I were glad to follow.

CARDINAL. Not you, most gracious Sénéchale.

DIANE.

Not Henri ?

CARDINAL. Nay, nay, the King is of a lusty health.

You must not thus contract his joy—discretion !

If you can bear with such shrewd counsel as

The Mouse, that glides behind the royal curtains,

Then nibbles at the women's sweets, and tends

His whiskers at confession of a crime,

Can proffer—you will smile beside the King.

These marriages of his fair child and sister

To Spain and to Savoy sting him with passion

For feasts and tourneys. In the ardency

And in the full absorption of the pageant

He plays Chevalier to every woman

Who challenges his courtesy——

DIANE.

These jousts,

These bridals, and the King to lead the jousts !

CARDINAL. The King is caught by little brilliant
flowers

In the parterre, by little brilliant flowers.

These brides and . . . yes, Montmorency mis-
carried ;

He forced the King ; he pressed into his hand

A velvet moth : it is the things that flit,

Poise of themselves and flit, that are pursued—

The brides and the young Dauphiness . . .

Most honoured,

You must not move among the flock unwary.

If you could stoop a little ! There are arts . . .

Enchantress, if you disenchant, the world

Is disenchanted. Do not misconceive.

A little *herbe d'amour* in its lithe crimson
Shoots to the eye more vivid in desire
Than any drooping rose.

DIANE. Entreat me not,
Good Cardinal, to falter from myself.
[*She stands erect before him.*
I shall continue . . .

While these little flowers,
The brilliant flowers of the parterre, change hue
Chameleon-like and differ with the days,
Self-same I shall abide.

Involuntarily she seizes her bow. HENRI
enters ; he pauses before her

HENRI. The Majesty !
And *Donec impleat orbem*—the great oath !
Diane, you have not heard ?
It fell on me at vespers in a dream—
I have sent forth the cartels to the world—
That all these jousts are solely in the honour
Of my sole Princess. Insignificant
And foolish pastimes now are like the ripple
Of an oar that spreads its ripples to a beach.
Yes, Cardinal, it came to me at vespers
How for my Lady I should front the world.
CARDINAL (*bowing*). Her glory is assured. I would
all kings
So dreamed across their prayers ! [Exit.
HENRI. Diane, Diane !
I am triumphant, carried far away

As in a revelation. Though the fires
Have burned out all my guiltiness for sin
Most heretic, appalling to myself,
Yet on your face I found that cloud a sinner
Leaves on the mournful eyelids of his God.
Then fell on me this glory, given in dreams
Of one who rode triumphant in the lists :
The gonfalon, the shield,
And the plumed helmet, all were of Saint-Michel,
Pure white . . . and then the rider's face was
turned :

He wore your favour, and he wore your smile.
Vigour is on me of my single aim
To overthrow the chivalry of earth.
We will sweep up to heaven !

Diane, what is it ?

Your brow is as the moving clouds. What portent?
It cannot be of cloud.

[She caresses him, averting her face.]

DIANE. Your visage is too bright—a revelation
Too bright, too bright !

HENRI (*clouding*). *Ma mie,*

I should not thus have boasted. You misdoubt—
You think this is a legend ? I confided
My hope to you. . . . 'Tis foolish to confide
Hope to a woman, for she dashes it. .

DIANE. Henri, I do not doubt, or if I doubt
It is that I can ever live to bear
A miracle so infinite, such love.
Henri !—Come with me. . . . Listen !

There is music
Below there in the Chapel. You shall choose
More music, and . . . I shall recover strength.

*[From below the steps leading down to the Chapel
at the back a solemn music is heard. HENRI
and DIANE are moving toward the Chapel when
MONTMORENCY and NOSTRADAMUS enter.]*

HENRI. My Master of the Ceremonies, greet him !
He is all ours.

DIANE (*holding out her hand*). My own !

MONTMORENCY (*grasping her hand*). Then, Madam,
'tis to you I make my prayer,
And as your humblest, faithful servitor . . .
For I have tidings, rather I should say
A warning of such fearful vehemence
And evil omen——

HENRI (*hotly*). O Montmorency,
How dare you bring the glittering, tainted fears
Here, where we have our royalty ! Beloved,
There is a rumour running through the Court
To stop this pageant ; a conspiracy
To drown your honour. It is jealous spite,
Vile, jealous spite ! Montmorency, retire—
Be it your business to shut up these mouths ;
Command the Queen to keep her peace ; forbid
The spreading of infection by such threat
Of my displeasure . . .

NOSTRADAMUS. At the word of doom ?

HENRI. You are ashen white . . . The liar's hue,
my faith !

NOSTRADAMUS. I am ashen white : so white will be
your face

Upon the sod, in this appointed joust,

If you encounter . . .

[*At HENRI'S clenched hand, he retreats.*]

DIANE. I would hear this man ;

I would encounter him. Step forward, kneel,

And take an oath of truth.

NOSTRADAMUS. The King is doomed.

DIANE (*leaning on the shoulder of the KING*). Henri,
speak you to the astrologer.

HENRI (*supporting her*). Give us the worst, as you
were charged with news

Of sorrow to our kingdom. What is written

By fate is written, if the moment speak.

NOSTRADAMUS. You fall and in a duel.

HENRI. Then indeed

You kindle me. Good Nostradamus, welcome !—

Not of the poison-bowl, beloved, nor fading

Of a slow sickness, nor with glazed eyes

To leave you . . . sudden, of a sudden stroke,

And from my peer, and in some cause of honour

Between contending royalties. Look up !

Beloved, my life in all its flow

Is yours : now in a symbol take my death.

NOSTRADAMUS. The King is willing for his death, he
loves you ;

They all are willing for their death who love.

Leaving the marble of the forcèd word—

Will you consent

The King shall die in duel ? Then dissuade him
From entering the jousts where two and two
The combatants contend.

MONTMORENCY. For sake of France !

[DIANE *seats herself on her white satin bed.*

You have made for France a king :
He sways above us, as a bowering tree
Full of deep scents and riches of the treasure
Whereof our kingdom hums. Will you cut off
This glory ? Will you leave our France a desert ?

[DIANE *stretches her long hands over her knees.*

You dare not say you are not moved, you dare not
Make light of the inscription on the wall.

DIANE. No : I am superstitious. . . . No !

I have been very ailing, very sad.

It may be but the shadow of my sickness
That has brought transit of so many shapes
Before my eyes. . . . One day

I met a royal stag that looked on me
With eyes so mournful, lingeringly enslaved,
I took it as a token I must die.

But it may otherwise be read : King François
Was haunted by a vision such as this . . .

He bade us mark how noble was its gesture,
Serene in triple-antlered majesty,
An hour before his death. I have unbosomed :

[*In answer to an impatient movement of*
HENRI'S.

Nor have I yet the clue . . .

NOSTRADAMUS. Though sad with your own omens
and constrained

To utter them aloud !

MONTMORENCY. What hinders you ?

Madam, what hinders ? It is in your power

To stay the lists, to stay all circumstance.

DIANE (*her eyes fixed on HENRI's*). I cannot stay the
lists.

MONTMORENCY. He comes,

This mighty soothsayer, from the Queen's
chamber.

The Queen in wifely terror at her dreams——

DIANE. Then she had dreams ? Quick, say what
she beheld.

NOSTRADAMUS. She beheld nothing : but a great
unrest.

Surged in her bosom like an apparition,

And coupling this with her anxiety . . .

MONTMORENCY. Think,

If you should lose your great Chevalier, Madam,

You were left desolate.

DIANE (*rising and standing by HENRI*). That has no
force.

I cannot stay the lists.

[*He stoops and kisses her hand.*]

MONTMORENCY. O Madam,

You are proud, very cold ; you would be
famed

For an unwavering mind. This is ambition

And selfishness of heart and vanity.

DIANE (*closing her eyes*). Peace ! . . . If it should be
vanity ! . . . Repeat

The omen once again ; repeat it slow.

NOSTRADAMUS. *The young lion shall surmount the
old,*

*Upon a field of war, in strangest duel ;
Shall drive his eyes out in a cage of gold,
And by two wounds portend him death most
cruel.*

The stars conjure, the stars

Conjure us to take warning : you alone——

DIANE. How on a sudden, Stars,
Shall I have strength ? It may be I believe
This thing will come to pass. For there is nothing,
Nothing so sure, not even the fashioning
In secret of a child's bones in the womb,
As dreams of their fulfilment. On his part
The King has had a vision : as Saint-Michel
He saw himself. Each portent may be death.

MONTMORENCY. Madam, let this decide ; if you
believe

The King will perish in this duel, dare you
Send him disheartened to the lists ? 'Tis murder ;
We will not see it done, we standing by.

HENRI. Diane ?

DIANE. The King has had a vision.—Henri !
[He puts his arm round her.]

HENRI. We are lovers : we can part.

(Laughing.) Pledged to a vision,
And honourably, I shall take my death

In duel . . . was it not, astrologer ?
Come, Steward of the Ceremonies, come,
Montmorency . . . for I must choose a horse.

DIANE. Le Turc.

[HENRI smiles, and lifting his plumed cap, bows low to her and goes out with MONTMORENCY, followed by NOSTRADAMUS, who turns at the door, and fixes on her a gaze of reproach before leaving.

I will go down into the Chapel,
To hear the music. . . . And I go alone.

[She caresses a mantle of the KING'S, thrown down ; then, passing to the Chapel, she pauses at the sound of requiem-music played by the organ.

And there is music breaking from the tombs !
O terrible, for they are lost, these spirits,
That are so tempted, being lost,
To wander down, and further off, more
strange.

[She closes her ears.

I could have stopped the lists. . . . I am forbidden,
And must be Queen down here, among the
dead,
For my great vanity. . . . I am forbidden !

[To funeral music she descends into the chapel.

ACT III

SCENE I

Paris. The Terrace of Les Tourelles. Under the moon, women and chevaliers, moving in groups, are seen for a moment, and disappear, a few of their words only being heard.

VOICES. A baby-bride !—

The other,
Our Marguerite de Valois with the long,
Black glances of the King, a lovely woman !—
Yet all the chivalry of France, a-ha,
For *La Vieille* and her sixty years !
Spring, throw it to the moon !—

Let autumn rule,
And sapless days, *ma mie* !—

Throw to the moon
All colours bold and flourishing ! This tourney
Is as the end of tourneys, dedicate
To snow and to black melancholy.—

Hush !

The omens, hush !
Our Court has ever flourished black and white,

And it will flourish black and white to-morrow ;
And there an end.

Hush, hush, the stars will hear.
But we of youth and summer, let us dance,
If stars wake up or sleep.—

Pierre, a dance !

Rosette, Rosette !

[*They go out, leaving BRUSQUET alone.*

BRUSQUET (*sitting central on the parapet*). They are
so busy ; but they must take a little rest in sleep ;
the rest must come. . . . So busy for their graves !
So busy, they need no fooling, when they most
need the fool.

*To further end of the Terrace enter CATHERINE
DE MÉDICIS and NOSTRADAMUS*

CATHERINE. But now, but now . . .

NOSTRADAMUS. Madam, the naked stars can reveal
to us nothing.

CATHERINE. It is from them you have learnt ? . . .

NOSTRADAMUS. In their hour, in the hour of secrecy.

Do you bring a priest to the Bible ? The Hugue-
nots stare at Scripture : the faithful believe the
interpreters.

CATHERINE. O Nostradamus, I believe. Help me,
help me ! Have you seen deeper from your tower
by *Les Halles* ? Have you seen further ? You
interpret woe ! Help me ! I cannot lose him.

NOSTRADAMUS. You cannot ! Then persuade his
Mistress to entreat . . .

CATHERINE. These things, if they are fated—shall a mistress snap the threads of destiny? My prayers—are they not stronger?

NOSTRADAMUS. Look at her!

DIANE, in white and silver, enters at the other end of the terrace

CATHERINE. Nostradamus,

She is toying with the fool. . . . Go to your tower!

Watch till the wandering stars are lost, and all
The bristled sparks gone out. In ambuscade
Of yonder turret I will wait my moment
To plead with Madam, for his sake, his life.

[NOSTRADAMUS goes out, CATHERINE moves back into darker shade.]

BRUSQUET *(as DIANE looks up at the stars)*. O Lady Moon,

Do you consult the stars?

DIANE. That were mere fooling.
The moon lays back the stars.

Pace with me, rogue!
I love the wind! This South blows through my
blood!

It is all rustling—and the Milky Way. . . .
How full of silent mischief are the stars!

Brusquet, there is no place for you to-night.

BRUSQUET. No place for folly here, yet you intrude!

I go to bed.

Fool, my Brusquet, feign

A screen to those dark windows full of ears.

Motley between the lovers. . . . Our morose
And angry sovereign turns me out of doors :
You reinstate me—you !

[The fool goes off, then turns back.

King Amadis, if you so solemnly
Encounter him? They say the moon shines
ill

DIANE (*again looking up exultantly*). The King shall
hear the music of the spheres,

No prophecy

I have a peace deep as I read the gold

Of my name's letters in the Book of Life :

And I must give this peace
To my beloved, must give it to the King.

[*She turns at a movement over the grass.*

CATHERINE *is at her side and lays her
arms and head on DIANE'S shoulder.*

My Queen !

CATHERINE. Belovèd Counsellor !

DIANE (*as they embrace*). You seek me ?

A while ago

I caught you bribing the astrologer.

What worlds 'twixt him and me ! All prophecy,
Deep where it wells, is voice of that which is.

CATHERINE. Our King will die to morrow in the
lists. . . .

Do you not feel it ? You will lose him, Madam.

Dissuade him from the folly

Of this most fatal thing. . . . He will not see me,
He laughs me off. But you have felt the presage !

[DIANE *looks away beyond* CATHERINE.

Madam, there are some hours

Fated as death. . . . I catch upon the air

The exhalation of a fatal hour. . . .

Do you not feel it ? In my hour of childbirth

I trusted you ; your courage

Gave France an heir : now you must save her
King.

[*She grasps DIANE'S hands.*

Madam, you do not love him. . . .

Have you not felt the presage ? But I love him ;

I cannot see him die. What can I offer

Of gold, of jewels, of fair signories ?

DIANE. His wife, you offer bribes ? What jewel
have you

That you can offer me ? What fair possession ?

CATHERINE. But if to-morrow he should perish,
what

Would be your recompense ? Then you would
learn

Your truer titles.

[*In a soft whisper.*

I should rouse the Court

To hiss you from my widowhood.

DIANE (*taking CATHERINE'S face in her hands*). Pray
for him

Night-long, alone, and in our Lady's Chapel ;

Night-long and in the dark.

Go from me now !

I am gravely superstitious.

To your prayer !

The King rides forth to-morrow, on a horse

Or white or red, I know not : but he rides. . . .

Oh, on Le Turc !

CATHERINE. The King rides forth on the pale horse
of Death ;

And you will not dissuade . . .

DIANE.

The King rides forth

Secure in God.

[*She comes humbly to CATHERINE.*

Sweet, you must pray for him :

It is the only magic for this hour.

You love him ! I beseech,

Give him the grace and valour of your prayers.

CATHERINE. Ha, you beseech me as I am his wife,
His queen, his rightful queen ?

DIANE. I ask your prayers.

CATHERINE. Because our God will hear me, for my
wrongs

Cry rending in His ear ?

But you can save the King yourself alone,
Without my prayers that are your accusation.

No need of me—a motion of your hand's
Entreaty, a few words upon your voice,
Your suppliant voice harmonious to him—kisses,
A little grasping in embrace . . .

*[Her hands on her breast, she throws back
her head, with closed eyes.]*

O Power !

If I had power, if I were with the things
Attractive on their way. . . . If I had power,
The blessedness founded in stars and yielded
To persons of affinity with stars. . . .

If I might reach out into time and cog
Its wheels, or set its hours in beamy whizz ;
If I could love with such star-brushing will
That it was even with the lights of doom,
If I had power majestic or but power
Of any earthly strain !—Power ! Power !

[Opening her eyes.]

O Madam,

Could I but leap into your chariot, guide
With reins like you and be to him I love
As was his cradle-star with his first breath,

Or hold his breath from passing !

Had I power,
Would I beseech a prayer for him !

DIANE. Our King
Has bidden us keep our silence. In the Chapel
Pray silently.

CATHERINE. Had I but power, my God !
Could power be given me once, at last, nor
vain ! . . . [*With a deep, patient sigh.*]
But I must pray, my King and husband, pray.

Re-enter BRUSQUET

BRUSQUET. Madam !

CATHERINE. Whom seek you ?

BRUSQUET (*to DIANE*). Madam, where is Madam,
Where is our sovereign Lady ?

CATHERINE. Which of us,
Fool, do you beckon ?

BRUSQUET. Madam, Sovereign Lady,
The Palace is distraught ! . . .

Two maiden-beds—
Have I not seen them, as indeed a boy
And maiden in my folly ?—two white beds,
White with their virgin flowers, stay coveting
Your benediction and your sanctity.
Two brides desire that you will visit them
To give them courage of your brave ensample
So to be queens and wives.

[*While he has been addressing CATHERINE,
DIANE has removed to a distance.*]

CATHERINE. She shrinks away.

I will go with you, fool.

Where is the King ?

BRUSQUET. Still with his armourer.

. . . This entrance, Madam ;

One of Love's passages, and a fool's exit.

[They go out through a narrow door.]

DIANE (*laughing*). The Motley ! My fine-witted
fool, the jangle

Of his bells across the sward ! Cajolery

How chaste and prudent ! Now a matron's
cares

Will keep us sacred to our loves. . . .

What darkness !

Another darkness on the wavering dusk

More massive, closer in encompassment—

The King !

*[They embrace. Then they come forth into the
starrier air beyond the shadow of the Palace,
by the side of the fountain. As DIANE leads
him forth.]*

There is no moon.

HENRI. Is that an augury ?

DIANE. Dullard, I wrestle for a compliment.

Am I not perfect Luna ?

HENRI (*moodily*). Dissonance

There was and laughter.

Did you send your fool

To check me at my prayers ? . . . Diane, your
laugh !

DIANE. I will not make confession, not to you,
Though I did laugh. Beloved, in all these years
I have been aging in your sight and passing
Through the russet darks of autumn to this
age,
You have not laughed.

HENRI. I lay before my God
In prayer to offer you a perfect praise :
For, when I strain you to my heart, Diane,
I am as bruised, I am made void ; it is
As I embraced the blessèd Crucifix,
And must fall back and die.

If it be boasting,

Or if you mock me in this vast attempt,
Greater than any ever made by man,
To write in fame how I am moved for you ;
If you reject this service, if it seem
Fantastic . . . O Diane,
In youth I sang you now and then a verse ;
You said my letters had a song in them
Heard low like music that we do not see ;
You said . . . And now our lives are paired, and
now

I have you by me as my breath and live
By the wisdom of your counsels, all my state
Guided by your great patience, I am dumb,
And a remoteness creeps upon our love.
I must do something infinite, immense,
Before these formal lovers, to transcend !
They shall be served, a hundred lances broke ;

But at the last, and when all mortal strength
Is slacked, I will ride forth with a fresh challenge.
Diane, I am accoutred of the angels,
And in my truncheon is the Mass of God.

DIANE. Henri, my great Lord Love !

HENRI. But, if you doubt,
I am a phantom knight and through my flesh
Death will pierce swiftly, Death will break my
guard :
Or if you credit any auguries,
And pray where superstition sits, and take
The fumes of sottish magic . . .

DIANE. If I doubt !
Henri, but I have doubted day and night,
Since the first day that was our day of love,
When you returned from your captivity
To find no welcome, and your Spanish eyes
Prayed to me from their prison, while the King
Bowed over Madam d'Heilly with a kiss.
I doubted.

HENRI. Well you might—a boy, an owl
Blinking the light from his captivity !

DIANE. Yea, I did doubt . . .

HENRI. The twelve long years of kingship offered
you ?

DIANE. And still I doubted. Never have we
spoken

Together of our love ! Henri, I doubted
If I could so suffice you.

HENRI. Goddess !

DIANE.

Yea,

To you, my great Lord Love.

[They are fast clasped.]

HENRI.

But now. . . . Not now !

If I should die ! There are the auguries.

DIANE. Nay, we have often read of Amadis,

How he passed under the Enchanted Arch

Built to pronounce true lovers, how his name

Broke from a silver trumpet's mouth, with vent

Of flowers showered down, and how at last he
strove

To the Forbidden Chamber : when you stooped

And wondered at the story as you read,

I laughed a little at your jealousy ;

But while your eyes burnt on, my Amadis,

I heard your name and 'mid strange elements

I only saw your triumph. Can I doubt ?

But every night and on hard stones I pray

So to be loving even as I am loved.

Go forth—go in !

HENRI.

Embrace me !

DIANE.

No !

Our loves resume as softly as the stars.

Go in—go forth !

[HENRI slowly turns back into the darkness.]

SCENE II

Paris, Rue Saint Antoine. A curve of the lists, facing the seat of DIANE as Queen of Beauty. She sits central, dressed in cloth of silver and black velvet cloak. BRUSQUET is by her, in a coat of many stripes. Her women sit behind. FRANÇOIS DE GUISE with the CARDINAL OF LORRAINE press round her.

CARDINAL. Burning July—hot by the river! Hot,
Par Dieu!—and cloudless. What of augury?
Is Nostradamus sheltered while the welkin
Is broad in smile against his quiddities?
A hundred lances broken!

BRUSQUET. Yea, a hundred,
All broken!—so the world is formed to wag!
A hundred lances, and our Sovereign swears
A hundred lances must be broken . . . then
He will break lance, O Madam, for your sake.
A hundred—ay, ay, world—and one beyond!

DIANE. Brusquet, you darken Nostradamus even
With riddles of the dark.

CARDINAL. Ho, Brusquet, there!

Your book is lying open on your lap,
Your little motley book of the world's fools.

Let's see . . . my name. [*Lifting up the book.*]

GUISE. O villain fool, a lady's!

CARDINAL. Goddess, forgive, nor turn us as your hounds

To rend this infamous Acteon's patches.

DIANE. My name !—We rend a jest

If we explain it. Brusquet, I am written

Largest of fools. . . . Be rent and speak me clear !

GUISE. Justice deserved !

CARDINAL. Fool, lift your stomach toward your mighty head,

And so pluck courage for your death. Explain !

BRUSQUET. Who risks the hundred for the one,

May find his hundred drawn and spun—

Oh, for the odds !—his counting done !

[BRUSQUET *shivers*.

DIANE. Is it a quaking tertion on you, Brusquet ? . . .

No, no—a little greyness in the sun . . .

A drowse of life about the tribunes. Hark !

The lists so sudden quiet, as if the silence

Itself were calling. Monsieur le Duc, what is it ?

GUISE. A little silence : such

As comes in celebrations when the glory

And feast dread time. . . . So soon our fêtes are over,

Always these little pauses come in joy :

Even at the Holy Mass have you not known them ?

DIANE. How vacant !—Nay, who rides up tall and strong ?

ALL. Your black and white—our King. *Vive, vive le roi !*

DIANE. High on Le Turc !

VOICE (*heard*). Must I believe, my lieges,
This kingdom France holds no good lances more?

GUISE. A ringing note!

CARDINAL. Who's that?—Old Vieilleville
In protest? Would he close the glowing lists?
Ungenerous—because his belly's knoll
Is sinking into table-land for dinner.
These grey, old guzzlers at a tournament!

MONTMORENCY *joins the group*

MONTMORENCY. Listen! A challenge! Peace!

HERALD. I, Henri, King of France, challenge
Monsieur de Montgomery, Comte de Loche, in
tourney to prove his lance and truncheon before
Diane the Queen of Beauty and the Goddess of
all Radiance.

GUISE. A famous lance, a man
Of sudden angers red along the neck.
These Scotchmen!

MONTMORENCY. Montgomery's answer. Hush!

HERALD. I, Gabriel de Montgomery, Comte de
Loche, take up the challenge of my liege-lord,
King Henri, to tourney, and will prove my lance
and truncheon before Diane the Queen of Beauty
and the Goddess of all Radiance.

CARDINAL (*to DIANE*). What did you kiss?

DIANE. This little ornament,
And for the words.

CARDINAL. *Until it fill the world—*
His *Donec Impleat Orbem* . . . and his gift.

DIANE. His promise—oh, it lightens down on me ;
And we must act our homage to our glory
When Heaven fulfils . . .

(*To BRUSQUET.*) What are you writing now ?

BRUSQUET. The name.

DIANE. What name ?

BRUSQUET. His that is France.

ALL. The King's !

BRUSQUET.

When one has struck and noon is gone,
Rest still nor gird your armour on,
Until the sun is set that shone.

Poor fool, poor fool—

I am a'tremble though the wise have felt
No slacking of their sinews, though our whitest
Of fools half-rises to the sovereign fool
Who tempts not Heaven, but number and the
odds.

GUISE. Peace from offence, fool. They face gallantly.

[*Below HENRI appears on his charger ; he salutes DIANE ; she smiles fearlessly down.*

CARDINAL. O rapt sight of the mysteries !

BRUSQUET. O madness !

[*HENRI retires ; there is a sound of encounter heard.*

MONTMORENCY. Parbleu !

DIANE. His guard is broken ?

MONTMORENCY. Hush !—He sits . . .

The strongest seat in France or in the world.

CARDINAL. So Phœbus sits his car. God pardon me,
I thought an instant Phaeton seared our eyes.

ALL. *Vive, vive le roi ! . . . le Turc !*

DIANE. Magnificent !

Would that Maître Léonard were here on earth
To see a horseman level with his art.

Le Turc swept like a sea the mighty curve
That brought his rider stable.

What applause ! . . .

I have forgot the cymbals of my palms.

Let 's sound him a *triomphe* . . .

MONTMORENCY. They are recrossing, Madam.

DIANE. At turn of the event no acclamation . . .

Stillness. . . . Gone, gone the breath of all the
field.

MONTMORENCY. Ha !

GUISE. The King falls—by Montgoméry's fault,
He kept his broken lance, and splinters it
Against his sovereign's visor.

(*To DIANE.*) Have no fear.

An accident of but a minute.

CARDINAL. Duchesse,

They have untangled him. Le Turc is free.

DIANE. Le Turc—free !

GUISE. They have drawn the King below.

MONTMORENCY. Murdered before our eyes in wan-
tonness,

Our Lion, our King !

[*He descends.* HENRI is brought in below among
exclamations and whispers. Le DOCTEUR

VESALE *supports his head*. CATHERINE DE MÉDICIS *rushes to him*. DIANE *remains transfixed, standing white in the tribune*. They *unfasten the visor*.

CATHERINE. His fate, his very fate !

The cage of gold, the eyes—O cruel death !

CRIES. She swoons . . . and he has swooned.

CATHERINE (*rousing herself*). Struck, torn ! His fate
has rent him, as was told,

But left him mine at last. . . .

(*To le DOCTEUR VESALE.*) Not dead, not yet ?

VESALE. No, Madam—no !

CATHERINE. Bear him away from all malevolence

Of aspect, from the evil lights of darkness ;

Bear him away to me at Les Tourelles.

My King, own husband—Henri ! Raise him up,

Bear him away—my cloak beneath his knees.

Gently. . . . Remove, remove ! I am here for
him.

O Doctor, how the flux of blood creeps up

Out of his eyeball ! *Jesu Maria*, lift him

To pillows . . . Henri !—Soft, to Les Tourelles !

Henri ! [*He is borne out, CATHERINE clinging to
his fallen hand.*]

CARDINAL. Be ready at Queen Catherine's side !

This stroke turns grave—the blood profoundly
welling,

No knowledge of himself.

GUISE.

I am with the Queen.

[*He descends.*]

DIANE (*suddenly*). He is not there. . . .

BRUSQUET.

O dearest of all fools !

[*He weeps.*]

DIANE. Where are they gone . . . the little figures
twisting

Or running round a spot I could not see ?

Empty !—All gone away. . . .

Monsieur le Cardinal,

Will you win entrance for me to the King.

Oh, it is pain ! And he will cry, will waken. . . .

God pity him !

Pray you, win entrance for me

Monseigneur, to his Majesty !

[CARDINAL LORRAINE *descends.*]

Gone too !

Brusquet, fetch news. . . . I say it with my lips,
But feel all news is gone to echo now,

Wandering the Seine and garden-trees. Dear
Brusquet,

One thing Love rules—that I be overthrown

With my great Knight. Go, plead for me, en-
treating

The Queen, by her fair mildness and old friendship,

She grant me but one touch of the King's hand,

To give him peace in anguish. Humble me,

As vanquished on the lists. Run ! run !

BRUSQUET.

Fool's errand, Madam !

But you are written in one book—my kindred.

Keep this for pledge I go.

[*He tosses her his book and leaves her.*]

DIANE. The precious name
Washed out—tears drowning all the characters.
Brusquet ! . . . Tears, tears ! [*Turning.*
My women, doves before the hawk ! . . . My
 women,
We are indeed left bare—the hawk at poise.
Gather your veils and fans. This privacy
Of ours is public to the crowd. . . .
 Yet wait !
Some one approaches. . . . Pain, his pain ! My
 Henri !

Enter Messenger

MESSENGER. Madame de Valentinois, you are bidden
Retire yourself from Court, at the Queen's
pleasure,
To your domain, restoring the crown-jewels
In sum and kind, then forthwith leaving Paris.

DIANE. Is the King dead?

MESSENGER. No, Madam, but will die ;
The surgeons and physicians speak him dying.

DIANE. No master have I while his Majesty
Has life but in one finger ; and I fear
No enemy : but when he shall be dead
My sorrow will forget all injuries
Or insult in the vastness of its world.
For should he die, as the ascended moon,
Full to completion of the dead sun's light—
World of its world—I should reiterate
His shining till I set. I have no light

Of Mercury or Jupiter or Mars,
Nor any splendid planet, nor any star,
Nor luminary spangled on the heavens,
Nor darting 'mid the air, except my sun !
And from him only—my bright sun !—
The favourable kindness of his grace.

MESSENGER. Madame la Duchesse,
Catherine, Queen-Regent of the Realm of France,
Requires of you the Château of Chenonceaux,
Sequestered from the throne . . .

DIANE. Château Chenonceaux
Was never of my title as is Anet ;
But held of living gift while the great giver
Breathes breath of life. The gift is unannulled,
The King . . . God's mercy soothe him !—being
alive.

MESSENGER. You must obey the Queen, Madame la
Duchesse.

DIANE. Here we are public : seek us in our house.
[*As the Messenger leaves, BRUSQUET returns.*]

BRUSQUET. Fool's errand, Madam ! . . . Soothe !
She would not let you pass the palace-threshold,
Not pass——

DIANE. I have bowed down my soul. I enter
My Hell, where is no Christ—Love at a distance,
And every hour in sufferings and in fire . . .
Henri ! . . . Christ come to us !

[*She weeps, groaning.*]

BRUSQUET. Brave, blessèd Lady,
The little Médicis weeps too.

DIANE (*drying her tears with her silver veil, as she gathers her cloak round her*). She weeps !

To Anet, women—to the little Chapel.

[*Perceiving* GOUJON *standing quietly near her*.

O Anet, Anet, Anet !—safe,

Maître Jean, the Dream safe, and fast-sealed !

My Henri

Reared me his Castle of Love's Holy Grail

On my own land, and there I have possession :

Those woods will flow

Their alleys sun across my tears ; for ever

The fountains throb their source, and the clear
image

Of our great dream, in many a dream, enmesh me

To my far-banished King, that everywhere

Among the mirrors and the golden tissue

Of glasses, and the *grisailles* of the panes,

Among the balustrades and lovely doorways,

The statues and sky-fixed enamels, Henri

Will meet me in his presence, for we twain

Are by the very substance of our love

With beauty consubstantial. To all ears

Save yours, my Goujon, and to Palissy's,

Or Cousin's, or my Philibert de l'Ormé's,

How cold such words !—but not to yours, my love

Being safe in consecration as your dreams,

High and still kindled as the heavenly moon.

And if he die—my one, my sovereign joy—

His death will reach me, in a breath about,

Not of the forest coolness any more,
But infinite, set free from a deep heart
That is the depth of mine. . . . If he shall die,
You will at Anet raise my sepulchre,
Where you have raised me Goddess of his youth . . .

[Suddenly, with a moan.]

But oh !—his pain, and the impassable,
The torturing gulf ! How I am shut from him,
And he from me ! . . . Christ come to us in
Hell !

Oh, for Death's nearness—when the dead at
large

Find closer ways to life than when they lived !
. . . Christ come to us ! My Henri, none will pass
Save one that is divine between us now.

From where I am to where you are none pass . . .
Henri !—the great gulf fixed !

*[She goes out, folded in her silver veil. BRUS-
QUET takes up his little book she has dropped
and follows her in front of her women.]*

GOUJON. Goddess of Heaven,
She is the Moon left in Love's Universe,
That cloudless brow of hers, those languorous lids !
Now she becomes an effigy, as noble
As the firm glory it perpetuates,
Old, but as marvellous old marbles age :
And half her years'
Unconquerable legend we salute !
For her the Dream, for her a Sepulchre,
And I to serve her till she fill the world.

SCENE III

Paris. Les Tourelles : the KING'S bedchamber.

HENRI is stretched motionless in stupor. CATHERINE DE MÉDICIS lies prone on the floor, near the bed. The royal ladies, the DAUPHINE MARIE STUART, the Princesses and the Brides of the late festivity, all dressed in white, stand round.

The Connétable ANNE DE MONTMORENCY and the CARDINAL DE LORRAINE bend over CATHERINE. It is growing dusk.

CARDINAL. Madam, not as the very grave to lie

In hopeless sorrow were a Catholic
And humble sorrow.

Raise yourself and drop
The groaning paternosters one by one,
Yet from eased heart.

MONTMORENCY. Madam, rise up ! Take comfort.

CARDINAL. Your hand !

CATHERINE (*kneeling as his hand draws her from prostration*). That he should die ! O Cardinal,

He will be dead to-morrow : and if dead . . .

It is the gulf that we have leapt across

Dazes us : what were any pit before

To one behind and traversed, memory

Booming and toiling of the phantom years

On years in requiem helplessness.

CARDINAL.

O Madam,

You have a king, your son, and this young
daughter [Showing MARIE STUART.
CATHERINE (*on the breath of a whisper*). My poor, frail
boy, my François—king !

His queen, young, fresh, unwrinkled !

(*Patiently.*) Must we wait,
Wait still ? . . .

O Cardinal, they cannot rule !
We are Queen-mother in the realm, and Regent,
If we are widowed. . . . Regent.

Marie, child !
Come, let your uncle see me kiss you . . . Regent !
You, the young Queen of France !

. . . There, leave me, friends ;
And, children, spread your white veils round your
knees

Before the altar.

[*The CONNÉTABLE and the CARDINAL with-
draw. There is profound silence and the
dropping of beads.*

Husband !

[*It is dark now, and the altar-lights fall on the
white dresses of the beadswomen. Of a
sudden CATHERINE stands up.*

Why, how strangely
And utterly familiar !

(*She looks round*). The black night,
The black-browed bed, standing, a catafalque ;
And then this whiteness lit on shade and gloom—
A whiteness from the satin and the pearl

Of brides in bridal dress. . . .

What have I seen
In life, in all his life—what have I seen ?
What does my memory implacable
See ever but this wedded black and white ?
And I, if I would mourn him, must assume
The colours of my rival and the badge
Of his unfaithfulness—the black and white,
In death as life !

*[She throws herself prone ; after a moment
she rears her head.]*

But, Henri, when you die,
The jewels, the crown-jewels, all your gifts—
By rote I know them, tabled every one—
These shall be rendered to the Widow-Queen
As to a Treasurer, firm, coloured things ;
Though for your sake, beloved, I must take,
And must adopt and wear by day, by night,
Her colours, even as you : and I shall wear them
While I am breathing in the lonely world.
Among us only black and white . . . on me
Ermine and sable, for I am a queen,
Queen-mother, Regent of my husband's realm,
And Regent of my dying son. . . . This queen,
This Marie Stuart, young, ambitious, favoured—

[In a loud voice.]

Pray by your private altars, leave me silence ! . . .
I am to lose my husband, dress in black,
Trail the white ermine. . . . I am full of faintness
I am to lose my husband. . . . What are children,

Dying from year to year, by the strait loss
And central of their father? Leave your prayers!
Put out the candles. . . . Hush! I would not see
The gulfs that teem this faintness; go!

[They pass out, as she moves towards the bed.]

My Henri,

Black, white for evermore—for evermore
Our triple doom! O Henri, but to-day—
Am I not still in gold and red to-day?
Whose is the hour?

He stirs . . . his cry will follow;
Time has defeated the kind medicine.
The cry will rend me.

[She hurries to the anteroom.]

Monsieur Vesale, help!

HENRI. Oh, oh!

Torn all to pieces and alive! A stag—
As when the biting hounds leap on its haunches,
And the poor, royal head must register
Death-agonies of prorogation, torn!
Hounds on me . . . and I cannot die.
Torture beyond the pains of death!

[He moans deeply.]

Alone—

Diane, your royal stag, and run to ground!
A wilderness, the dogs, the panting air;
The frenzy. . . . O the vortex of mad teeth!

[He moans again.] CATHERINE DE
MÉDICIS and le DOCTEUR VESALE
approach the bed.

CATHERINE. He cries—you hear !

VESALE. This poppy should allay his martyrdom,
His tortured crying-out—the brain being torn
With fatal laceration.

HENRI. Give it me—

To drink, to end . . .

VESALE. Nay, Sire . . .

HENRI. Not to the wound !

[*Turning to CATHERINE.*

Or send me my one salve,

You keep from me, Madam, my Watch-and-
Ward !

Send me my salve !

Doctor . . . Be human ! Doctor,

Tell me the one true thing : has she not
pleaded

To visit me ? She ever cared for beauty,

The statues with their polished, perfect brows ;

But yet . . . Be human, tell me the one
truth,

Mid all this calenture of brain and sight,

In which what seems is nowise what it is,

That she has pleaded.

VESALE. Peace !

Keep still nor fret ! Will not the gracious
lady

Thank us if you shall heal.

HENRI. Stop, Catherine—listen ! listen !

In the deep nights I came to you, your
husband :

I came of her persuasion all these nights.
Are you not left Queen-mother of a race
She guards with care, as Artemis the young
Of the enfolding forests? Pity her!
I am swift-dying of such agonies
As master reason. . . . Let me feel her hand,
To nip, when the pain gnaws me, her dear
rings—
The jasper dragon with its sparks and beams,
The ring of the four metals, and the ring
Made spireways with the pointed diamond-stone
And perfect balay ruby. . . . Oh, her touch—
As the moon's on the substance of the sea,
Garnering all its madness, she celestial!
Oh, her still touch! . . .

Doctor, she prayed to come?

CATHERINE. Fret not! If you recover she will
thank us.

Henri, my life,
Do not wrest off the poppy; let my fingers
Press solace on the gash.

O Henri, Henri,
You have confessed; God's oil is on your
senses,
You are prepared for wayfaring and safe—
You are prepared for wayfaring by God. . . .
And in His sight, Henri, I stand your wife—
His mercy bathe you! Turn to me, O Henri!
Through twenty years of dream you have re-
jected

The wife who, virtual, loved you as her
husband

Through famished girlhood to stale yesterday :
Who now is as a dog beside your body,
A dog beside his stricken master's body,
Keeping a foe at bay.

HENRI. But it is savage—cruel,
How they divide us.—As in *Amadis*
De Gaul, the hands, that beat upon the air,
Battling and hindering up the fatal perrons,
The iron and the marble and the copper,
Amadis fought through to the wondrous Chamber
Where he and Oriana should be joined.
Remember me, O Dian,
Now at this hour : I pass the line of spell.
Doctor, you know the hand was large and
hard,
An old man's hand, that gathered Amadis
To the Forbidden Chamber.

Ha, la, la !

Take off your fingers, Catherine, take the
paddle
Of your quick fingers off. Leave me alone !
And would you countervail ? . . .

My only Princess !

Through all the roar of voices, the besetting
Of strife, O fiends, she the Most Beautiful,
Will come to me in the Forbidden Chamber.
Doctor . . . Oh, for God's sake, help, help ! The
girding

Of mortal pain ! Give me a poppy-draught,
Oh, give me death ! More poppy !

Not this woman—

You, you, old man . . . your hand, your large,
hard hand. . . .

I know my own heart . . . have no fear.

[*Clinging to his bedpost.*]

Lady of Succours, help . . .

(*To CATHERINE.*) Ha, no, no, no !

CATHERINE. I will not leave you—at the very
last.

I have loved you in the dark as from a tomb,
My dying one, and you are mine. I hold you
Against all demon powers. . . .

HENRI (*in a low, surprised voice*). And from this
wandering softness,

New-born ? O moonlight !

I am retired with it. . . .

O Moon, increasing,

Dewing with silver rills and all my pain

A sacred ecstasy ! The years all gone !

Dian, my Lady, O Most Beautiful

In the Forbidden Chamber ! Dian, Dian !

The ends of youth and age meet soft together,

Ah, very soft ! I lie,

Safe in the growing, glistening silentness

Of thy own magic, thy Endymion.

Ha ! thou hast hunted for me : I am found !

Doctor, nurse, priest, who ever presses near,

I am lone from you : do not speak . . .

No prayer, no touch. . . .

I shall lie white in night,

And when you come at dawn I shall be dead.

CATHERINE. Henri, my husband !

VESALE.

Peace !

RETURN TO the circulation desk of any
University of California Library
or to the
NORTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
Bldg. 400, Richmond Field Station
University of California
Richmond, CA 94804-4698

ALL BOOKS MAY BE RECALLED AFTER 7 DAYS

- 2-month loans may be renewed by calling (510) 642-6753
- 1-year loans may be recharged by bringing books to NRLF
- Renewals and recharges may be made 4 days prior to due date.

DUE AS STAMPED BELOW

APR 22 1997

U. C. BERKELEY LIBRARIES



C055182978

C055182978

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

